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YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY IN INDIA.

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YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY IN INDIA.

I.

OUTWARD BOUND—THE OLD TIMES AND THE NEW.

JANUARY in the Red Sea. Noon. The Peninsular and Oriental Company's steam-ship *Nemesis* is making nine knots an hour through the bluest water I ever beheld. We left Suez yesterday, and begin to feel intensely Eastern, as Overland passengers always do at this point. Those who had never made the journey before, appeared to expect that their Indian experiences would commence as soon as they left Southampton. By much reading of guide-books they brought their minds into a state which rendered it impossible to call their lunch anything but tiffin, or their cigars anything but cheroots; and I believe that but for the ruthless

prohibition of the cold weather they would already have begun to don their white clothing, of which they had, with a prudence quite unnecessary, kept out a supply for impossible contingencies. By talking to the old Indians on board—who gave themselves airs of superiority—they had actually picked up whole phrases of Hindustanee in the first few days, which they aired remorselessly, to the confusion of appropriateness and the bewilderment of comprehension. They bought government Manillas (made in the Minories) of the stewards, by way of training, and realized in the beginning a no uncommon end, by making themselves thoroughly sick of the country to which they were bound.

It was by the second mail in December, 1853, that I traversed the Overland route for the first time. In those days even the railway through France was incomplete. The railway from Paris dropped you at Châlons, and the steamer took you up at that point, along the Saone, to Lyons. The diligence carried you thence to Avignon, where the railway began again, taking you in triumphantly to Marseilles, with the air of having brought you all the way. This mixed mode of travelling is certainly more picturesque and pleasant than being propelled the whole way by the same agency, with as few breaks

as possible, and no rest to speak of. There were several English travellers making their way to catch the same mail as myself. I had met one of them before, at Dover, when he had asked me if I was going any farther than Calais, and I had answered, "Just a little farther—towards Caubul." We now fraternized, of course, and the other Overland people did the same, making up a little party of their own, and experiencing a foretaste of that strong characteristic of "Indians," a sense of that bond of union which, however they may quarrel among themselves, seems to separate them from the rest of mankind. Among those on board were two young gentlemen going out in the Civil Service; one free, the other in the custody of his father. The former was ready to bet any amount on anything, and play whist at impossible points; the only serious care he condescended to recognize, relating to the safety of three boxes of saddlery—including, I believe, a side-saddle or two, for contingencies—which he was taking out with him in anticipation of that first-rate stud which he has probably found out by this time costs a great deal of money to keep, even in India. He presented a contrast in most respects to the second griff, who, besides being in custody, was treated like a criminal. Not for him were the adventurous bets, or the

impossible points. For him no Mr. Peat had provided saddles upon improved principles, with English trees, such as the Indian-made article can never match, and sound leather, such as even Cawnpore cannot supply; bitts adapted to every kind of mouth, Arab, Caubul, Waler, or humble tattoo of Mofussil life; bridles that will hold anything; and spurs that are a delight to the heel. In the stead of these indulgences he was furnished with plenty of lectures upon the impropriety of gambling in any shape, and the ruinous consequence of keeping horses of luxury for any other purpose than carrying their owner whither he may want to go, for which object it must be admitted that some ten or twenty of those animals does seem an undue allowance. There was an old Major (Majors were not minors then as they sometimes are now) who had been disappointed, as Majors of the old school always are, who scowled upon his young allies, said unpleasant things touching what would have been their state and prospects "in his time," and did not hesitate to liken them to "young bears, with all their troubles to come." There was also a subaltern officer, who had been out to India sufficiently long not to like it, and to prefer being at home on sick leave, which a certain class of servants of the

extinct East India Company appear to consider the natural and proper state of things in a civilized universe, and any invasion of which, even after three or four years spent in the most vigorous amusements at home, they consider a violation of their privileges.

At Marseilles we passed Christmas-day, upon which occasion the people of the hotel treated us to a French version of the pudding of Britain, which would possibly have been a very delightful production had it appeared in a solid instead of a liquid form; but for great travellers (in prospect) like ourselves, it would have been inappropriate to have betrayed any insular prejudices, so we all sipped it philosophically, like citizens of the world. The following day saw our embarkation on board the *Vectis*, one of the swiftest of the P. and O. ships, employed expressly for the mail service between Marseilles and Malta. The conditions of this short voyage, like the rest of the sea route, were the same as in the present day; but the transit through Egypt varied considerably.

The railway at that time was among the things that were to be, but was not; and the Nile boat was our means of passage to Cairo: a preliminary boat taking us to the river, along the canal as far

as Atfeh. To any person looking upon these boats in the light of hotels, and attaching much importance to personal comfort, it must be confessed that the experience was decidedly unpleasant; and as the majority of the passengers did take this view of their claims upon the company, in consideration of liberal passage-money paid beforehand, you may be sure that the grumbling was no joke, and that threats to write to the *Times* were the rule rather than the exception. But the more sensible minority took a philosophical view of the matter, made themselves independent of bad refreshments by undergoing a little temporary starvation, and of bad accommodation below by carefully keeping above, and giving themselves up to the mental enjoyment of the new scenes by which they were surrounded. At Cairo came more change and new sensations in abundance; and the old mode of transit across the desert, in vans, had charms in the way of novelty and excitement, compared with which the railway is tame indeed.

But all these things have passed away, and the journey through Egypt is now as prosaic as a trip from London to Liverpool by the express train. It is not until we get once more

on ship-board, in the Red Sea, that we feel ourselves really in the East. And it is here that these reflections occur to me, while reclining under the awning on the raised forecastle, whither sensible men retire to smoke, and to get whatever amount of air is to be had, which is sure to be at the bows.

My fellow-passengers will most certainly find a great many things changed, besides the Overland route. India To-day is not the same India that it was Yesterday—Yesterday being understood as meaning ten years before the present year of grace 1864. Yesterday, the East India Company were the kings of the country. To-day, her Majesty reigns in her proper person. The old régime had its good side as well as its bad. The Company was a good master, at any rate to those in its employ, who deplore its downfall with tears in their eyes, and a great deal less in their pockets than they had in the days of its prosperity. The Company's servants in those times had the loaves and fishes of the State all to themselves. Small chance was there then for the barrister of seven years' standing, or the interloper of any kind, to get a share of them. The Supreme Court judgeships, to be sure, were

given to members of the British bar; but the judges of the Sudder, or Native Court of Appeal, were more highly paid, and were, besides, eligible for even more elevated appointments. As for the non-professional interloper, he had nothing to hope for but subordinate posts, which, if not posts of honour, were certainly posts of danger, for he was always exposed to the chance of being thrown out of employment at the caprice of his superiors, who were not bound to provide for him for life, as in the case of the patented, or covenanted men. The outsiders, indeed, whatever their natural social position, belonged to a different class altogether—so separated by the official barrier that there could be no mingling of the two in private intercourse, except in exceptional cases. In the military service the Company's officers enjoyed equally exclusive rights. For them, and for them only, were the great majority of staff appointments, the snug little things—and the snug great things too—in civil employ, always much coveted by military men in India, who in most cases seemed to take up the sword mainly as a means of carving their way to the pen. A Queen's officer got the Command in Chief, to be sure, and generally the Presidential Commands;

but there was very little else within the grip of her Majesty's service, whose presence, even in the country, was looked upon almost in the light of an impertinence.

There are men—very good men, very sincere men, and by no means very foolish men—not quite so extinct as the Dodo, who believed, and do believe, that the old system was a far better one than the new; that India was better governed under the Company than it is under the Crown; that the natives were more attached to our rule, and that we held the country under less hazardous conditions than in the present day. The very objection most frequently made to the old system they consider to have been one of the main sources of our strength. The administration was given up to about a dozen families, who monopolized the nominations to the services, and by consequence monopolized everything else that preferment could procure. The more fortunate got appointed to the Civil Service, or, failing this, in consequence of incapacity or misconduct at college, obtained Cavalry commissions; and so numerous were the plucked candidates for civil employ, who subsequently turned up in those pretty uniforms of grey and silver, which have

now faded like the light of other days, that they were known as the "Haileybury Irregulars." The next best thing to the Civil Service was the Artillery, always held in high honour in India, as it deserved to be; and for those who would not, or could not, aspire to this arm of the service, there was the Native Infantry. In this manner were "the families" distributed through the services; and the fact that few besides the said families were found on its rolls is still considered, as I have said, by persons whose opinions are entitled to respect, a benefit to England and to India, which must be placed on the losing side of the latter-day reforms. The natives, they say, believed in the old families; their names were hailed as a safeguard; a guarantee that the antiquas viâs would still be preserved as standing-ground; an assurance that old rights would be maintained, and—I am afraid I must add—that old wrongs would not be interfered with. The latter is the awkward point; granting it, the advocates of the old system were probably in the right. But what can be said for the permanency of a system which relied upon so brittle a basis? It might hold together for a time, but its breaking-up was inevitable. It would be nonsense to

suppose that there were no men out of the pale of "the families" competent to administer the government. The time came when this prejudice had to be broken down. The principle of nomination gave way to competition in the Civil Service and in the scientific branches of the army, the Artillery and the Engineers. In the Civil Service the old names are not lost sight of. The "Competition Wallahs" are not all new men: they include members of some of the best of the "old families," who have proved that they can fight their way as well as gain it by favour, but they also include others, whose families were never before heard of, who promise to be second to none in the race for distinction.

The amalgamation of the old "Company's Army" with that of her Majesty has not, to say the least, been a measure of unmixed benefit. That it was a logical consequence of the accession of the direct government of the Crown is not to be denied. But there is no more reason why things in India should be reduced to their logical consequences than things at home, where we are cheerful and prosperous in the midst of anomalies which would drive a thoroughly consistent man to despair. The absorption of the Company's Army into the Army of the

Line—which is the real effect of the measure, the official term "amalgamation" being a misnomer—deprives the country of a local force, far less easy to create than to destroy. I here allude to the European army, as far as the men are concerned; but to the army, European and Native, as far as the officers are concerned. The native force is necessarily Local, but the officers, whether sent to native regiments or not, are all on the same footing with the officers of the Line, except those who have been transferred to the Staff Corps, and who are therefore no longer eligible for regimental employ. The Local European Army was (with the exception of the additional regiments added to it a few years ago) a force composed of a better class of men, for the most part, than usually enlist in the line; men tempted by larger pay, and greater opportunities of promotion than exist at home, to embark their fortunes in the East; and who had sometimes good reasons for desiring to remain where they would not be known in their new position. In the Artillery, in particular, there were frequently men of good rank in life who had exhausted their means, and offended their families, and desired nothing better than an obscurity which would be an obscurity at any rate, and from which they would have a chance of emerging into fame and fortune.

Such men form materials for an Army which no great General has ever despised. The "Company's Europeans," moreover, were acclimatized men, not likely to die off like rotten sheep the first bad season; men who were prepared to make the country their home; men who, by acquiring the native language, in a greater or less degree, had gained some knowledge of the character of the people, and who were therefore more likely to cultivate them as allies than kick them as "niggers." They did not, moreover, require to be brought home every few years, and so saved an immense expense to the State; the waste, not only of money but of life, in the Local Army, being held, by the best calculations, to be considerably less than among the troops of the Line serving in India. The greater popularity of the old service over the new was sufficiently shown by the "White Mutiny" of 1859, when the majority of the men of the Local force refused to serve on the new footing proposed to them, and insisted upon having their discharge.

The case of the officers was not so easily disposed of. They could not take their own parts exactly as the men had taken theirs; all they could do was to contend for the retention of their rights as to pay, promotion, &c., upon which they entered the service,

and these were very handsomely guaranteed to them when the amalgamation measure passed the House of Commons. But the guarantee turned out mere moonshine. There are at the present moment (1864) many hundreds of officers of the old army out of employ—the State paying them a very large sum for doing nothing; but a very small sum compared with what they would receive if they were only allowed to earn it. This is more or less the state of the juniors; the seniors have for the most part complied with a very pressing invitation to retire upon "bonuses," which arrangement they loudly declare to mean nothing more than a liberal measure of starvation. The remains of the "Company's Army," officers and men, will soon disappear; and all we can hope is, that all the evils anticipated will not be brought about by the change.

This is not the only amalgamation of which we have to see the effects in India. The Supreme Court, and the Sudder (or Native Court of Appeal), have been united, under the name of the High Court, of which there is one in each Presidency. The Queen's Judges and the Company's Judges (natives among the latter) will henceforth sit upon the same bench and administer the same law. There are some objections to the plan, as the

Company's Judges have hitherto known nothing but Company's law, and the native Judges are not supposed to be proof against prejudices of race, and may possibly look upon the Europeans brought before them in the same light as the Scotch doctor regarded his English patients, when he remarked upon their perversity in dying, by saying that it would be a long time before they made up for Flodden. But if the perfect equality of the two races is to be insisted upon as the spirit of the future government of India (in the latter it is impossible to carry it out), some plan of the kind is inevitable, and the present will doubtless answer the purpose. One advantage will most certainly be gained—that the "civilian" Judges, as well as the barrister Judges, must manage to understand the pleadings of the bar, or be driven from the bench; and that the former, as well as the latter, must of necessity undergo a special training for the purpose. A crying evil incident to the old state of things will thus be avoided. For the rest, it is considered by the philosophical advocates of the elevation of natives to the bench of the High Court, that if an European suffer any injustice at their hands, he will make such a noise about it as to prevent a recurrence of the scandal. So that the judge does

not hang his man off-hand, this argument has perhaps some value; but as the question is principally interesting to persons about to commit crime, I may be pardoned for leaving its more comprehensive consideration to their care.

The constitution of the local government has undergone a change, as well as the legal administration. It is something less than ten years ago that the Legislative Council was first called into existence. Great hopes were entertained of the experiment; but it was soon found that the assembly was too large for conversation, and too small for debate; and another anomaly was also apparent in the fact that, the members being all public servants, the Council included a paid Opposition as well as a paid Ministry: the power of the former becoming so great that the Governor-General had to suspend the standing orders whenever a difficulty arose, and to carry his measures through by sheer force of bullying. The members most generally in opposition were the Judges of the Supreme Court, who, being independent of the Government of India, could venture to have opinions of their own. They did good service on more than one occasion; but there was no room for real independence in a Council so constituted, where it was felt, moreover, that the

forms of the House of Commons were out of place, and only obstructive to business. So the Legislative Council was included in the batch of reforms, and is now called the Council of the Governor-General. It includes the select number of gentlemen forming the old Supreme Council, who assist the Governor-General in his more private deliberations; but in its legislative capacity it is much enlarged, and now contains non-official as well as official members, the former consisting of natives as well as Europeans. In the present Council there are no members representing the different Presidencies and Provinces, as in the former. The Presidencies have separate Councils of their own, formed on a similar plan, which are likely to do their own work for themselves far better than they could get it done for them in Calcutta. The powers of these Councils are not so great as those of their centralized predecessor. Their members are free to furnish as much information, advice, or even protestation, as they please, upon any measure of the Government; but they are not competent to reverse it by their votes, and the Governor-General, or Governor, as the case may be, has authority to decide for himself in the last resort, as if there were no such Councils at all. This may seem rather like a

retrograde movement for these enlightened days; but, after all, the powers of the former Council were very like a sham. There is no pretence of making the present assembly a little House of Commons; and until India is ripe for representative institutions—which she may be before many years are over—it is better that such institutions should not be brought into contempt. The admittance of non-official members in the mean-time is a great step, besides being an immense present advantage, both to the Government and the public.

A paper currency adds another to the signs of the new times which are beginning to bewilder old Indians. For some years past, the notes of the bank of Bengal have been in circulation in Calcutta, and very convenient the Calcutta people have found them. It is no uncommon thing now, for ladies and gentlemen to go about with money in their pockets, which they never thought of doing under the régime of rupees. But the force of habit has not entirely spent itself, and people scrawl down their signatures in tradesmen's books for such little matters as a pair of gloves, an ice-cream, or having their hair cut, when they would find it, if not more pleasant in the beginning, certainly more profitable in the end, to pay in cash. But the signature

currency is not nearly so much in use as formerly in Calcutta, and notes are generally adopted as the medium of exchange. "Up the country," notes do not circulate, and the old system prevails. People cannot or will not carry rupees about them, and everything they buy is noted down at the time, and noted up as high as possible at the end of the month. Mr. Wilson, with the concurrence of Lord Canning, determined upon a scheme for a paper currency which was perfected by Mr. Laing; but the home government, for some mysterious reason, will not allow it to extend to the whole of India, but has ordered that it be confined to Bengal. One would have thought, after the experience of the Mutinies, when the plunder of the provincial treasuries provided the rebels with the means of carrying on the war many months after they must otherwise have collapsed for want of funds, that no means would have been neglected to avoid the necessity of sending large quantities of specie into the provinces: but it seems, greatly to Mr. Laing's disgust, and that of every Indian reformer, that the benefits of the new currency scheme are to stop at the very point where they are most required.

Among the most important political reforms which will greet the new comer in India, are

those important measures in connexion with the sale of Waste Lands in fee simple; the permissive redemption of the Land-Tax, under certain restrictions, by a capitalized payment; and the extension of the Permanent Settlement, which has worked well in Bengal, to the North-West Provinces. The effect of these measures will be to give the British settler desiring to cultivate the soil, a footing in the country which he has never before obtained; and to render to the landowner, native as well as European, a degree of security calculated to give an immense stimulus to capital and industry, and to improve the condition of all classes of the people. Perhaps, however, I am reckoning without my host in anticipating these immediate benefits to India. It is true that Lord Canning sanctioned the scheme for the sale of Waste Lands, and the permissive redemption of the government demand upon other lands, and drew up the conditions upon which those measures were to be carried out; while he agreed to the principle of the extended Permanent Settlement, leaving only the details of the measure for after adjustment. Before he was added to the list of victims to the wear and tear of high office in India, he firmly believed that he had conferred these important benefits upon the country, and the thought, I can

well believe, lessened the bitterness of death. For these services he was lauded in Parliament and the Press, as few men have ever been lauded; and so general was the concurrence in the wisdom of his later acts, that the most inveterate of his earlier opponents were content to forget past differences, and look to his policy in the future with a gratitude which none doubted to be deserved.

But scarcely are the earthly remains of the son of George Canning consigned to rest in Westminster Abbey, than ruthless hands are laid on his best works, and the measures which of all others are especially required at the present moment for the encouragement of the cotton cultivation in India—not to speak of the general benefits which they would confer—are postponed for an indefinite period by the Home Government, on the ground that the conditions proposed by the late Governor-General are all wrong, and must be revised. This is especially vexatious in reference to the Waste Lands measure, which has been in actual operation for nearly a year: a number of grants having been made on Lord Canning's conditions, which were understood to have been long since approved at home. The main reasons given for the delay are, that the lands must be surveyed before they are sold: which means that

they cannot be sold for years to come, if they are ever sold; and that whenever they are sold they shall be sold by public auction: which means that after a man has expended time, labour, and money, in making himself acquainted with the suitableness of a certain locality, another man may wrest from him the fruits of his enterprise by outbidding him, or running up the purchase-money to a ruinous amount. Lord Canning proposed that the lands should be sold at a certain rate per acre, and under this condition large tracts have been already allotted —to be resumed, it seems, until some very doubtful period, when the whole question shall have been reconsidered. People in India are very much discontented at this wanton interference with a measure which has been lauded by the best authorities as being everything that it should be, and I suppose I shall find on my arrival that Calcutta is in a state of greatly increased heat on the subject. The main defect complained of in the new Indian Constitution, is, that it gives too great a power to the Secretary for India and his Council at home, to the great prejudice of the local authorities, who find their best exertions wasted, and themselves abased in the eyes of the natives to a point at which government has become well nigh impossible.

In material improvements, immense progress has been made between Yesterday and To-day. Ten years ago there was no Electric Telegraph, and not a mile of railway open in either of the three Presidencies. The post was the only means of communication, and the traveller who travelled as quick as the post did not accomplish much more than a hundred miles a day. Something under that amount was thought a very fair rate of proceeding, and a dâk journey was an exploit not to be lightly undertaken, even in the later days, when improved roads have permitted regular horse conveyance. When palankeens were the ordinary mode of transit, it was rash indeed to predict when the traveller would arrive at his journey's end. Since the Mutinies, when the policy of opening up the country to British settlement has been recognized by the Government, the railways have been pushed forward with great vigour; the great lines in the three Presidencies are rapidly approaching completion; and branches are also progressing in several directions. The journey from Calcutta to Delhi, which took nine or ten days by the dâk, may now be accomplished in four; and when the line is completed throughout the distance, it will occupy about two. An equal—or nearly an equal—rate of progress has been made

elsewhere; and in a few years there will be a network of railway communication all over the country, connecting all the important places. Who can estimate the progress which this will effect in the condition, habits, and manners of the people, as well as in the enterprise, industry, and comforts of our own countrymen? Mr. Laing, who never takes a sanguine view of things except in a strictly business-like manner, told us some time back that there are no bounds to the prosperity at which India is capable of arriving, if her resources are fairly brought into play; and almost every mail brings us news of some new road to wealth, or some old one not sufficiently traversed. A few years ago the China wars gave an impetus to the cultivation of tea. India already shares a considerable portion of the market, with the country which has hitherto supplied the world. At a future time she may render us independent of China altogether. The war broke out in America, and shut off the Southern States from the cotton market. It is from India that we have drawn much relief in the difficulty. And, with proper encouragement, the cultivation may be so extended in that country as to render it of little importance—as far as our cotton manufacture is concerned—if the North and the South go on fighting till doomsday. For the pro-

duction of silk, too, India has a far greater field than has hitherto been employed; and in this article of manufacture she may easily be the rival of China in a few years.

As regards means of postal communication, India is in advance even of home. We pride ourselves upon our penny post. They have a three-farthing post in India, which extends anywhere between the Himalayas and Cape Comorin—through the whole length and breadth of the land. This is an improvement effected within the last ten years. There must be more roads and railways, however, before the department can be as efficient as it might be; and a great deal has to be done in canals, before the commerce of the country can be fairly developed. But these are only questions of time. The policy of pushing forward Public Works, and opening India to all comers, being once determined on, the rest is easy enough. Already the effects of the immense material progress made since the Mutinies, is seen in the extraordinary rise in the revenue, which—combined with a judicious reduction of expenditure—has resulted in the transformation of an apparently chronic deficit into a surplus of which any Chancellor of the Exchequer might be proud.

What cannot fail to impress the new arrival are

the social changes which have taken place in India during the last few years. Time was, when the traveller on arriving, say at Calcutta, was such an object of interest to the residents that he might proceed at once to almost anybody's house, and make it his castle as long as he pleased. The barest introduction was sufficient to ensure him a welcome. Now, nobody thinks of going to stay at a private house, unless it be that of a particular friend or connexion. There are monster hotels where any number of travellers may be put up, and can be as well accommodated as in Europe; and the new comer who presents a letter of introduction gets only the conventional invitation to dinner—which is most likely to be à la Russe. Time was, when to this dinner (not then à la Russe) he would go dressed in white or nankeen; jacket, waistcoat, and trousers of the same pleasant fabric. After that, came a period when a man was expected to go in a black coat, but was uniformly asked by the host or hostess if he would not have a white jacket instead, which he as uniformly said he would; and the arrangement became such a regular one, that people who gave parties always provided jackets for their guests, some of whom, however, who were particular about fit, sent those garments beforehand, and kept them

furtively in the verandah until it was time to put them on. Now, everybody dresses for dinner as they do in Europe, and even white pantaloons are the exception instead of the rule. In past times, the hookah was the invariable companion of every male guest. Towards the conclusion of dinner a faint scent filled the air, which heralded the approach of the hookah-badars, of whom each placed the standing bowl of his master's pipe on a little piece of carpet behind his chair, brought the snake round conveniently, and insinuated the mouthpiece into its owner's hand. Then came such a hubble-bubbling as the new generation has never heard, and such a perfume as may be imagined from the composition of the chillum, which, besides tobacco, includes various perfumes and condiments of a sweet character, among which I may mention the article of raspberry jam. Everybody was then supposed to be at the pinnacle of enjoyment—even the ladies liked the odour, and often, it is whispered, produced it for themselves when at home. Now, the scent of a hookah in a house is considered almost disreputable—more especially as it gives rise to surmises that it is not the only manner in which the master of the house accommodates himself to native habits. As for taking a hookah out to

dinner, nobody ever dreams of such a thing. Some seven years ago, I saw such a proceeding on the part of one or two old Indians—privileged persons in houses where they were well known—and at the mess of a Native Infantry regiment, about the same time, they were sometimes introduced after dinner. But at the same station (this was in the provinces) a hookah which was brought by some innocent guest to the mess of a "Queen's" regiment, so scandalized the Colonel, that there was nothing for it but to take it away as fast as possible. Even up the country, where hospitality is more free than in Calcutta, there are hotels at every station—bad hotels to be sure, but still hotels—besides the Government bungalows; so that no traveller need have an excuse for intruding upon his friends, unless they particularly wish to be intruded upon.

I have hinted at other native habits in connexion with hookahs—of course I mean the habit of having a Zenana attached to the house for the accommodation of one or more native ladies. This is no longer a habit, I need scarcely say, with our countrymen, and if ever practised is scarcely ever known. Nor do old Indians, when preferring an English alliance, get out their wives from Europe—ordering them of their agents like so much beer or brandy,—as they

are accused of having done in the old days. The matrimonial market is now so well supplied in India that no man need go far to fix his affections—indeed, the general complaint among subalterns and other persons who are apt to suffer from what they call in Ireland "a pain in the pocket," is, that their affections (confound them) fix themselves too soon. But, granting this inconvenience, the change is decidedly a gain, and so is the new fashion, introduced of late years with considerable success—of leaving off drinking beer and brandy-panee *before* a point at which the consequences become disgraceful. Anglo-Indians in the present day are almost as sober as any class of persons I know. ...At dinner-parties people do not sit over their wine even so long as in England, and most of those who are able avoid beer altogether—substituting the lighter refreshment of champagne, which they take ab ovo usque ad mala—that is to say, from the soup to the coffee—thus avoiding that "mixing" which elderly gentlemen at home regard with much honour, and which few men in a tropical climate can long stand with impunity.

If any excesses are ever committed, it is by daring men just out from England—bachelors, perhaps, or some monsters of the kind—and as their proceedings

would be much the same anywhere, their faults can scarcely be set down to the Anglo-Indians. Everywhere in society, the old character given to Anglo-Indians is fast becoming inapplicable. One hears as little of high play and debt, as of delirium tremens; and when our countrymen ill-treat the natives, we *do* hear of it—which accounts for two or three instances of late, which have not brought us into very good odour in that respect. A class of domestic scandals, usually including elopements, is also far less frequent than formerly; and as far as these are concerned, it can scarcely be said that Anglo-Indians are open to greater condemnation than their European neighbours.

On the whole, the change from Yesterday to To-day is decidedly for the better. What the new arrival will miss, is a class of people in the country who consider it as their home. The danger which we run is that of becoming *too* English; of depending upon ourselves too much, and considering the natives too little. Our political policy now, is conciliation of the native princes and aristocracy, in order that we may employ them as our allies in improving the condition of the people. Our social policy should be of a similar kind. It is difficult, I know, to mingle much more with the natives than

we do, in private life, and the difficulty arises principally on their side. But the attempt should be made, and I hope will be made, and with success, as the settlement of our countrymen extends. At present, nearly everybody lives in India with a view to "home;" all supply themselves from home, as far as in their power, with everything that they eat, drink, and wear; anything "native" is looked down upon with contempt; and the time is fast coming—unless a healthy change takes place—when we may meet with hundreds of persons who have been in India, but when we may look for an "Indian" in vain!

II.

DOMESTIC LIFE—HOUSES AND BUNGALOWS.

People in Europe frequently entertain the idea that, in a hot climate, a house is of very little importance. With savages in Australia, and small annuitants in Italy, this is to some extent the case. One of the savages—we have it on the authority of a veracious writer—considered a mansion, which was presented to him, in the light of an ingenious contrivance intended to stand between him and the wind, and the furniture it contained as so much fuel, to be brought out, when wanted, for the cooking of his open air feasts—when he condescended to cook them at all. Annuitants in Italy, we all know, do not much care about what in England we call a home. A place of resort where they can meet their friends—which is of course a café—ranks as the first necessity; but, in fervidly hot India, the first question is, not how you may make life agreeable

abroad, but how you may make it supportable at home. To an European, most certainly a good house is the first necessity, as in it he will probably find it desirable to spend three-fourths of his time.

Domestic life in India presents the same general features wherever you may happen to be located; but there are particular features which vary, and the variations mainly resolve themselves into the difference between town and country. In the Presidencies —that is to say, in Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay— you will live in a house, although you may not occupy the whole of it, with actual stories and stairs. In the provinces you will abide in a bungalow— a building which looks nearly all roof without, and contains only one floor within, and that upon the ground. Bengal will furnish as good a comparison between the two as either of the other Presidencies; to Bengal, then, I will confine my remarks.

The new arrival in Calcutta naturally goes in the first place to an hotel. Time was, as I have said, when a man with a respectable coat and connexions would have put up at the residence of the first person he happened to light upon who had ever seen or heard of him before. But Calcutta hospitality has its limits, and it cannot extend itself to Peninsular and Oriental ship-loads arriving once a fort-

night and long-sea ship-loads arriving whenever they can: so unless you have a special invitation elsewhere, an hotel has become a matter of course.

A house in the "City of Palaces" is very apt to look like a palace. But the comparison applies only to that portion of the town where dwell the Europeans of the higher ranks, the Civil and Military officers, and principal merchants of the place. These congregate for the most part in the Chowringhee-road and the streets running therefrom, which make up the only neighbourhood where it is conventionally possible for a gentleman to reside. The Chowringhee-road is the most pleasantly situated thoroughfare in Calcutta. It resembles the best part of Park-lane in having houses only on one side of the way, the other side opening upon the Maidan, which, apart from the water, is by no means unlike the Park. The houses, however, are larger than the majority of those on the line from Piccadilly to Cumberland-gate, and are more imposing from the outside: the effect being mainly due to the large green verandahs on the first floor, and the inevitable jalousies to the windows—all of the same bright hue, rendered brighter by contrast with the white walls and clear atmosphere.

The "proper" thing for the new arrival, who has

an excuse for setting up an establishment, to do, is to take one of these houses. And, to do him justice, it must be said that he generally does so when he can, and occasionally when he can't—or shouldn't. The rent for a first-class mansion will be about three hundred rupees (thirty pounds) a month; occasionally more; and it may be less in the comparative obscurity of a back street. The furnishing is the next important business. In a place where people spend money on so comprehensive a scale as in Calcutta, the natural course would seem to be a visit to the principal upholsterers, the inspection of some pretty drawings and patterns, and a large order for the whole houseful of furniture, from the telescope-table on the dining-room floor to the Chinese curiosities on the drawing-room mantelpiece. But to this desperate course it is seldom necessary to resort, for the reason that somebody else has always been doing it before you, and has found out the mistake;—several somebody elses, in fact, especially in the Spring, which is the favourite season for going home, when the "valuable household furniture" of a dozen different persons at a time is entrusted to the hammers of the auctioneers. In the best houses this has been nearly all supplied by one maker, whose name is a guarantee for

excellence in a metropolis where it is generally too hot for people to form a taste for themselves. It will always be found of the last approved pattern, and to have a general character which will make it available for any new distribution. The family likeness, indeed, between the tables, the chairs, the couches, and nearly everything else, is somewhat fatiguing to the free eye of Europe, accustomed to the exercise of individual fancy in such matters, and to the miscellaneous mode of furnishing which has become the custom in London.

In Calcutta, you are expected to fill your rooms according to a certain standard, from which few have the courage to deviate; those who do, find out their mistake when they want to sell again. The young housekeeper accordingly pays a visit, in the first instance, to the houses where goods are exposed on view, previous to the sale; and here he will not only find all the wood, china, glass, and plated ware that he wants, but varieties of unconsidered trifles which are generally withdrawn from auctions in England—personal matters, including books inscribed with all kinds of people's affectionate regards, and the most curious kind of accumulations. These, the owners, if going home, cannot dream of taking with them. From them he makes

his selection—in as many different houses as he can find patience to visit—and his next thought, if he be a practical man, and like doing business for himself, will be to attend the sales when they come off, and bid for the objects of his fancy. Of this intention, however, he will soon be cured if his time be worth anything, or he have a decent amount of fastidiousness; for the brokers and others gathered together on such occasions will leave him no chance of getting any articles he may happen to want, except at preposterous prices. A friend of mine made the experiment once, and found that the result of his morning's work was the acquisition of seven live canary birds and a statuette—not a very useful contribution towards the filling of an unfurnished house. In despair, the new arrival does as most men find they have to do in England, if they want to avail themselves of auctions—he entrusts his purchases to an agent, who will look after his interests for the commission of five per cent. This agent is a native Baboo—a sleek gentleman dressed in white muslin, who usually speaks and writes English after a certain fashion—sufficient for the object in hand. In a few days the purchaser will find a considerable number of the articles he wants sent home to him at something like the prices he

has fixed, and a great many articles which he may not want at all, which have been purchased because the Baboo thought they would do. The Baboo is often a better judge than his employer, and the chances are that the latter gets his house made habitable at the charge of from five to ten thousand rupees—that is to say, from five hundred to one thousand pounds. Of course there are many establishments in Calcutta which cost far more to furnish.

Servants are the next consideration. Of these our housekeeper must have a little troop. The Durwan, or doorkeeper, who occupies a hut at the gate, is probably already provided—he had only to be taken on from the last tenant. For his own personal service, the Sahib requires a Bearer, or valet, who has an assistant to do subordinate work; a Khitmutgar, or table attendant; and a similar set besides if there be a lady, the Khitmutgar alone, in that case, being a man. Another Bearer or two will also be required for the house, besides Chuprassies, or messengers, for out-door commissions. Then there is a Bobachee, or cook, as a matter of course, and he, if he have any self-respect, will require an assistant; as a matter of course, also, there is a Khansamah, or steward, who buys everything necessary for the

house, and a great deal more, and who will bring you the longest bills ever heard of, unless well kept in hand. If the Sahib keep a carriage which requires driving by anybody but himself, he must necessarily have a Coachwaun, or coachman; and for every horse he keeps, he must in any case have a Syce, or groom, as well as a grass-cutter, to gather green food which cannot be procured in the bazaar. A Dhobie, or washerman, is another necessity, and an extra Dhobie, if there be a lady, for "the fine things;" and also a Dirzee, or tailor, or more than one, to mend the "things," coarse or fine, as fast as the Dhobie tears them, and to make up such articles of apparel as it may not be considered necessary to get from the "Europe shops." To these must be added, in the hot weather—that is to say, during the greater part of the year—an indefinite number of Coolies to pull the punkahs; and Bheesties, or water-carriers, to supply the house all the year round; besides one or more Malees, or gardeners, if the house happen to stand in a garden. Indeed, whether there be a garden or not, many judicious housekeepers find the advantage of keeping a gardener, for the sake of a supply of flowers, which are obtained with much greater certainty in this manner than if grown at home. They come, no doubt, from some neigh-

bours' flower-beds, but the recipients take a leaf from the rules of Government departments, which always ignore any facts of which they have not received official notice. The Sahib will also want a Chuprassee, or messenger, or two, and some subordinate servants.

A conveyance of some kind will be one of your first necessities. If you are a bachelor, and desire to practise rigorous economy, you may do without one of your own. A Palankeen—called more generally a Palkee—will take you any short distances you may have to go, and any long distances too, for that matter; but the motion is slow, and the jolting is fatiguing, and most men find it an intolerable nuisance to be long boxed up in a contrivance unpleasantly like a coffin. But a Palkee is at your command, if you please, for the small charge of a rupee a day, and a slight bakhsheesh to the bearers. Your other economical alternative will be a hired vehicle, known familiarly as a "Dumdummer," for the ingenious reason that it is much in request to take passengers to a place called Dum-Dum, a few miles from Calcutta, and a little further off than most people care to take their own horses. These thika (hired) gharrees may be had for from two to three rupees a day; but I would not advise anybody

to employ them—the turn-out being as abject a turn-out as was ever seen on four wheels. The body of the thing is very much like that of the dâk gharree, often described; but it is rather worse as far as springs are concerned, and the one or two ponies by which it is drawn are half-a-dozen degrees more wretched than London cab-horses. To crown all, the driver is always half naked, and occasionally three-quarters; and being gratuitously dirty besides, he presents a more picturesque than polite appearance on the box. In addition to these drawbacks, he is quite as extortionate as he dares to be, and if engaged for the day will get his money in the morning if he can, when he first sets you down. After he has got it, you need scarcely take the trouble to look for him again, unless you wish to waste your time, as he is probably engaged, also for the day, to somebody else. A great many attempts have been made by reformers in Calcutta to get the public vehicles placed under proper control (even the price is not regulated by law, but is merely a matter of custom); but the indignant correspondents of the newspapers, and others who ventilate the grievance, are always told that the laws of supply and demand must be respected, and that any measures towards cleanliness, comfort, or

safety, in regard to the gharree-wallahs, would be an interference with free trade. We do not hear of this objection in London, where the faults of our cab arrangements are certainly not owing to the want of despotic restrictions. But our law-makers in this country sometimes use cabs themselves, which our law-makers in Calcutta never do. In the event of any swindling, you are of course told that "you have your remedy"—which you have, to be sure, when you can get it; but the process is at best difficult and vexatious, and is seldom worth the trouble involved. A third plan, available for those who do not keep their own conveyances, is to hire them at a livery stable; but this has its drawbacks, as a carriage and pair costs sixteen rupees a day, and a buggy and horse six; and in the latter case, where you drive yourself, you are exposed to all the chances incidental to a vicious horse, and the smash, if not of yourself, at any rate of the vehicle.

If you buy a conveyance of any kind you must take care that it comes from an European maker. A native-built vehicle will look very well at first, but you will soon find it is constructed on principles once adopted by the Chinese in building ships of war upon the English model: which ships were wonderfully ship-shape in every apparent respect,

but would not swim. A very few days of exposure to the sun or rain will set a native-built carriage gaping in all directions; the panels are found so shrunk or swollen as to have no relation to each other; the doors will do nothing that doors should do; the spokes fly out of the wheels at the first jolting; and the springs are a delusion after the first week. The iron is rotten and the wood is green, and nothing is genuine but the putty and the paint, which cover up all defects. There are two or three English makers who have a good reputation, and of one of these you may get a very fair vehicle—a buggy for six or seven hundred rupees—a barouche or park phaeton for a thousand or fifteen hundred; but you may buy them, nearly as good as new, at auctions, for considerably less. Your horses will cost you much the same as in England. The country horses are far cheaper, but people drive larger and more pretentious animals in Calcutta—the Australian or Cape horses being much affected. A really good, well-trained saddle-horse, is always worth a good price here, as in most other places; but there is an objection to Australian horses, or "walers," for this reason—that they have an apparently unconquerable habit of shying at elephants, and camels, of which latter animals you may meet a

string of a hundred or so anywhere out of the street of Calcutta.

There is one advantage attaching to the keeping of conveyances in Calcutta, which compensates to a great extent for the original expense. Once procured, you may keep one going at comparatively little outlay. The current cost of a carriage and pair, including the pay of coachman and two syces, and the keep of the horses, need not be more than fifty or sixty rupees a month; the coachman being content with some twelve or fifteen rupees; the syces with six or seven; the grass-cutters with four. Your other domestic servants are paid at similar rates; your Khansamah getting about as much as your coachman; and the other servants less, in proportion to their standing and importance.

On the whole, the expenses of a Calcutta establishment, though considerable to "set up," are by no means so great in their current amount as might be supposed. The Calcutta establishment will cost less to keep going than one of similar size and pretensions in England. The difference in point of economy amounts to this. — A small income, upon which you may manage very well in London, will scarcely enable you to live at all in Calcutta; that is to say, if you live in respect-

able European society; but granting that you would enjoy certain comforts and luxuries in either country, they are more easily obtained, on a moderately large income, in India than in England. You will get less in India, out of three hundred a year, but you will get more out of one or two thousand. Your wine will cost you more, but provisions of all kinds far less: except those, of course, which people persist in having out in hermetically-sealed tins from England—a practice indulged in far more than is necessary—owing to the fashionable enthusiasm for things European, and the fashionable depreciation of things native, prevalent among our countrymen.

An establishment in the Mofussil differs in many respects from an establishment in Calcutta. You have a bungalow instead of a house—that is to say, a kind of a house which is called a bungalow. It usually covers a good space of ground, as it well may, since it has no upper floors; and it stands in an enclosure called a "compound." This may be laid out as a garden, or may lay itself out in any way it pleases—which is sure to be in a very lavish manner as regards rubbish and weeds: a great crop of rank grass growing up in the rainy season all of a

sudden, to dry up and die out as the heat sets in. There are a few trees in it, and a few tombs, perhaps—the latter of which may not be disturbed without giving deep offence to the Mahomedan portion of the neighbouring population; the first signs of which would be manifested by the running away of your Khansamah, Bobachee, Khitmutgars, and any other of your servants who chanced to be followers of the Prophet. And after these had run away you need be under no anxiety as to the chances of their coming back again, or the probability of getting others in their place; nothing of the kind would be likely to happen. You must, in such a case, be content with any horrible specimens of casteless Hindoos you could pick up, and your life would be a burden to you so long as you remained in the station.

Supposing that you do nothing so foolish as to disturb the tombs, you will have your establishment about you very compactly. On one side of the compound are a row of huts, intended for all the Sahib's horses and all the Sahib's men, and there they all live at their ease. The quadrupeds, it must be confessed, are as well provided for as the bipeds; and as for the Syces,

they generally share the horses' beds, sleeping between the feet of their charges in a manner which appears to be mutually agreeable. If pressed for space, the Syces will even bring their wives and small families to partake of the same accommodation, and none of them dream of considering the arrangement a hardship. In the day-time, the ladies of the family will bring their charpoys (you can always take up your bed and walk in India), and recline thereon pleasantly in the sun, making the children's toilettes, as far as they can be said to have any, and occasionally their own, with all regard to modesty, but with a perfect absence of constraint. The household arrangements of your other servants are also transacted at the doors of their dwellings; and as most of the men have wives, and most of the wives have children, there is sometimes no little crowd and confusion. A whole village talking at once, at the top of its voice, might give some idea of the rush of tongues. Mussulmans and Hindoos agree very well in general intercourse, and exchange the most intimate confidences concerning their masters' affairs—especially those of a pecuniary character, with regard to which they are sometimes better informed than

the Sahib himself; but their familiarity extends no further. They will not eat together. The Hindoo goes to a retired part of the compound and cooks his dinner by himself, at a fire made by means of a couple of bricks and a little hole in the earth, or he has it brought to him by his wife, or somebody of his own caste; and he feeds in silence and mystery. The shadow of a Christian, or a Mahomedan, or even a Hindoo of lower caste than himself, falling on the meal, is supposed to defile it. Its owner will not taste it after the contamination, but casts it to the winds, or the dogs, or any pariah Hindoo who may care to pick it up. Your Mahomedan servants will not be so particular about their meals, though they always take them among themselves. Sometimes they take them in the middle of the night, for the sake of the cool air (as do the Hindoos also, indeed), in which case the united clatter of tongues and tom-toms (at these nocturnal feasts music is usually introduced) is enough to drive a light sleeper to despair. The Mahomedans prefer not to eat from the master's table; but conspicuous instances have been known to the contrary under circumstances of temptation. Khansamahs and Khitmutgars have been seen

when intruded upon unexpectedly, deep in Overland hams, and imbibing champagne not wisely but too well—very like orthodox Christians. But these same men, if you required from them any little sacrifice of the kind, might not have the smallest compunction in murdering you.

As regards their wives, the Mahomedans are more exclusive than the Hindoos. Indeed, the original inhabitants of the country never thought of shutting up their women until their conquerors came, and made such exclusiveness fashionable. Now, the wife of your humblest Hindoo servant will make a show of pulling her chudda over her face as you pass her charpoy on your way to the stable, though if she be at all handsome she will take care to be as tardy as possible in performing the operation. As for the Mahomedan women, they do not disdain to afford the same facilities, but they generally make a much greater pretence of mystery. I had a khitmutgar once who could not have been more than eighteen years of age, and he had two wives, who assumed the airs of being "purdah women"—that is to say, women who can never be seen at all in public. These he disdained to keep in his house in the compound, contenting himself with bringing them

there occasionally, shut up in close palankeens, from which they were smuggled into the hut with a wonderful amount of precaution.

But we are lingering in the compound, and have not yet entered the house.

The structure, seen from the exterior, may be very ugly or very pretty, according to the taste of the builder, or the tenant, or the resources of either. The most conspicuous part is the roof, which is of thatch, sloping on all four sides, and extending to within some eight or ten feet of the ground; it covers not only the house, but the verandah, which is sure to be some six or eight feet in breadth. This verandah, of which the roof is supported by pillars of greater or less pretensions, serves as a protection against both the light and the heat, which are very intimately associated in India, where you cannot keep a room very cool unless you keep it rather dark. Indeed, some persons shade their apartments to such an extent, that the occupants can scarcely see to read. The drawing-room and dining-room are, in many bungalows, situated in the centre of the building, so that no light is admitted to them except through the outer apartments, which open directly on the verandah; but they are sometimes more pleasantly placed. From the reception-rooms, in

nearly all cases, the bedrooms and dressing-rooms open, and as doors are very uncommon contrivances up the country, and curtains and screens are the general substitute, that retirement from the world which is achieved in England every night, by marching up-stairs and locking yourself in your bedroom, is very difficult of accomplishment. When half-doors, or screens, are in use, in the hot weather, morning visitors are never astonished if they see a bed in the perspective, or any other indications of the interior economy of the mansion; and if you have sought your couch at all early at night, you need not be surprised if you hear a great deal of the conversation of those who are sitting up.

The furnishing of a house in the Mofussil is a far more simple matter than in Calcutta. New upholstery is a vanity of which nobody dreams. There is a certain quantity of furniture in the station, more or less old, which circulates among the community, according to demand and supply. When there is a departure from the station the departure's "things" are sold off, of course; the residents take what they want, and the remainder go to a dealer. When there is an arrival, the arrival takes what he can get, and furnishes at once, or by degrees, according to his luck or resources.

The departure or arrival of a regiment will cause an important change, and a great many of the station movables will be redistributed. To meet the inevitable wear and tear incidental even to Mofussil upholstery, the dealers will occasionally speculate in new articles from other stations, or even occasionally from Calcutta, and will so give a relief to the general monotony. But a Mofussil house, though adorned under accidental and even precarious conditions, may be made very agreeable to the eye. The walls of your room are generally of whitewash, or whitewash with a dash of colour, but the room itself is so large that the roughness has no unpleasing effect. On the floor, you will probably have some coloured canvas, printed in patterns to look like a carpet, or relieved in the centre by a real carpet from Mirzapore, having a very brilliant, if rather a hot, effect. Curtains are not very general, but a great deal is sometimes done in this way with a little white muslin. The glass doors, which are also the windows, are shaded outside by green jalousies, or jilmils, as they are locally called; and when these are thrown back, they are shaded by chiks—that is to say, by blinds formed of thin strips of wood, thinner than lucifer-matches—extending across the doorway, and strung together just close enough to keep

out the flies, but not the air or the light. These are very convenient, as you have nothing to do but push them aside when you pass in or out; when painted in bright colours they have a decidedly ornamental aspect.

The punkah is such a prominent article of furniture, especially if there be more than one in the room, that it is found desirable to make it as pleasing to the sight as possible, and a great amount of decoration is frequently bestowed upon this appendage. It is difficult to make anything very graceful out of what, in its unadorned state, looks like a broad wooden plank, extending the width or the length of the room; but a great deal is done by a little ornamental painting, and a fancy frill, the latter being of especial use in circulating the air. Sometimes, instead of the common wooden frame covered over with canvas, which the apparent plank is in reality, the frame will be made of carved mahogany, and the place of the canvas will be supplied by red plaited silk, like the fronts of cabinet pianofortes. This is a gorgeous arrangement, and, to accustomed eyes, seems such a necessary part of the furniture, that after a little time the room would look bare without it. You soon reconcile yourselves to its removal, however, when the cold weather comes on, and to

seeing nothing of it for four or five months. This is only in the Mofussil; in Calcutta the punkahs are rarely taken down, though they are disused for a short time in the year. Punkahs are most peculiar to the Bengal Presidency. In Madras they are less used, and in Bombay less than in Madras. The operation of pulling is usually transacted in the verandah: the rope being passed through an aperture in the wall—a very convenient arrangement as regards your bedroom.

The punkah, by the way, in the provinces, is found sufficient—if you have a long frill, sweeping as nearly on a level with your pillow as will allow you to keep your head clear—to obviate the necessity for mosquito-curtains, which are an intolerable nuisance in Calcutta.

Another appendage to a house in the north-west is the tattie. This is a kind of screen fitted closely into the space left by the open door, and composed of a sweet-scented grass, called khus-khus. It is employed only during the hot winds, in April and May, and the doors are furnished in this manner according to the direction of the breeze. Coolies, stationed outside, dash water against the tatties, and keep them continually wet, so that the harder the hot wind blows without, the cooler and more fragrant is

the air which reaches within. Fruit, and water in porous jars, may be advantageously placed to cool under this influence; and round the tatties people gather as round a fire at home. Indeed, you may occasionally see our countrymen complete the analogy by cooling themselves as they warm themselves elsewhere—that is to say, by standing with their backs to the tattie, with their coat-tails under their arms.

The Mofussilites, as a general rule, lead a far more primitive life than people live in Calcutta. They get up earlier in the morning, go to bed earlier at night, and take more exercise during the day. The early ride, drive, or walk, is more general, and the afternoon siesta—generally admitted to be a bad habit—less frequently indulged in. Nine o'clock is a common hour for retiring to rest, and there are few amusements out of doors to tempt people to stay up later. Dinner-parties dissolve at about half-past ten. Amateur theatricals will occasionally induce late hours, and a ball later. But these amusements are only a change from ordinary habits. A billiard-table at a military mess or elsewhere will keep stray men going till twelve or so; but men who are not "stray" usually pass their evenings at home.

The expenses of an establishment in the Mofussil are far less than in Calcutta. Your house-rent will not amount to more than a sixth of the Calcutta figure. You will keep about the same number of servants, but their pay is not quite so high as in the metropolis; the country horses which you principally employ are much less costly than the larger kinds; and if you buy them unbroken, and look after their training yourself, you may get them wonderfully cheap. But a great deal of money *may* be spent upon horses, in the Mofussil as in most other places, if you are inclined that way, and some people are. The great advantage is, that they cost very little to keep when you have got them.

Your provisions—always excepting those which you choose to have from Europe—will also cost you very little. Anything in the shape of a bird is nothing comparable in price to the Calcutta figure (fowls may be had so low as threepence a-piece), and meat is even cheaper in proportion. Mutton is most approved, and it is customary for several persons to club together and keep a flock and a shepherd: the members of the club looking after the accounts by turns. When a member of a mutton-club leaves the station, somebody is always ready to take his share off his hands, the advantage of the plan being

indisputable. The mutton of the Patna breed, generally employed in the north-west, is very like Welsh, and is as good as any that Wales ever produced. With regard to beef, you generally take your chance of the native supply; with pork, sensitive people never have anything to do, in a country where the pig appears to exert himself to the utmost to justify the prejudice against him.

In the matter of ice, some such arrangement is made as in the matter of mutton. A subscription is entered into, at the beginning of the cold season, for the manufacture of this inestimable luxury, and the task is entrusted to a competent superintendent, who generally volunteers his services. The modus operandi is this:—When the cold season begins, large earthen pans or dishes, containing water, are laid out at night in a convenient place, and the ice which forms upon them is gathered in the morning and deposited in a large pit. The supply thus daily obtained for some four months during which ice-making is possible, is sufficient to last the station all through the hot weather: the residents being supplied every day with allowances in proportion to their subscriptions. The ice is not very solid or very clear, but it cools your wine, beer, and soda-water most effectually, and is even available for ice-

puddings and creams. At the principal Mofussil stations we suppose this manufacture will soon be abandoned, as the railways will take the real Wenham Lake ice daily from Calcutta, where it comes by ship-loads at a time, and where it may be had, to any extent, cheaper than in England.

The housekeeper in the provinces will do well to guard against a not very improbable contingency—having his house robbed. The ordinary bungalows are built on such very primitive principles, that fastening them up at night is little more than a ceremony; and even to that extent the operation is not always performed. Whether you are robbed or not robbed, depends entirely on your servants. As a matter of course, you keep one, and, as a general rule, two chokedars, or watchmen, who come on duty after sunset, and whose office it is to patrol round the house all night, calling out to one another at intervals, in insane sounds by way of furnishing proof that they are not asleep, and that nothing is the matter. They carry long staves tipped with iron, the principal use of which seems to be to keep them on their legs; for, as regards habits and general efficiency, they bear a family resemblance to the British watchman of departed days. Sometimes they are honest men, and sometimes they are

not honest men. It is to the housekeeper's advantage that they should be of the latter class, and for this reason: they are nearly always old men, and, in the natural course of things, will now and then sleep at their posts. If they be honest, the thieves will take advantage of the opportunity to enter the premises. If, on the other hand, they belong to the dishonest fraternity, the house will stand a good chance of being respected: the salaries of these gentry being regarded in the light of "black mail," which should exempt the proprietor from further extortion. Fortunately, however, it is not upon the chokedars alone that you have to depend. Your servants live on the premises, and do not betake themselves to distant homes at night, as in Calcutta. Some sleep in their huts in the compound, but several will always be found rolled up in their rugs in the verandah, and a couple or so will, if you tell them, repose in an anteroom inside, in order to be ready for any required service during the night; the service most likely to be required of them being the waking up of the punkah-pullers, who like to go to sleep on duty, although they had twelve hours for the purpose before their duty began.

A robbery cannot very well be effected without the knowledge of some of your servants, and without a

tolerably unanimous agreement among them not to inform. It is on this account that one seldom hears of a house being entered by thieves; for Indian servants, perhaps, are not so inclined to dishonesty as servants in Europe. It is true they do not consider theft so disgraceful as we do, and do consider the European, to a certain extent, fair prey. It is true they will pilfer on their own account individually, and will take stray articles that may not be in use, on the chance of those articles not being missed, and, therefore, they argue, not being wanted. They have a kind of conscientious statute of limitations by which they abide. If you ask for the thing within a certain time, they say it is safe in their keeping, and you have it at once. If you let the time go by, the thing will have gone somehow, and they know nothing about it. They restrict themselves, too, to articles in their respective departments. Your khitmutgar, for instance, would not think of taking your boots, and your bearer would show an equal reticence with regard to your cooking utensils. Either will probably try to take your plate or your money, if placed under lock and key; but both plate and money will be generally respected if committed to their care. You may give hundreds of rupees to your bearer or

khansamah, leaving him to make all necessary disbursements, and your money will be accounted for to the last pice. He will even regard himself in the light of your banker, and will make payments after the funds are exhausted: not reminding you, until the settling-day arrives, that you have overdrawn your account. He will make a small percentage out of most transactions, in all probability; but this is a dustoor, or custom, generally recognized, and the money does not come out of your pocket. Your khansamah receives a similar allowance upon the price of every article he supplies to your table. Some of our countrymen in India are scandalized at this proceeding, and prevent it as far as they can; but the system is prevalent more or less in all large houses at home, so there is no reason to accuse Indian servants of any peculiar immorality on this account. This is certain: your Indian servant, if he plunders you a little himself, will not allow anybody else to do so. Your safest course, therefore, is to place yourself in his hands.

A regularly organized robbery, if it takes place in your house, is a very disastrous affair. Not on account of the property stolen—that is probably of the least importance in the catalogue of your annoyances. If you pocket your loss—as the

Irish gentleman said—you simply give an invitation to anybody who may take a fancy to your spoons, forks, side-dishes, centre-piece, jewellery, what not, to come in and help himself when inclined. You must, for your own protection, make a demonstration in the matter. The consequence is, that the native police come and take every servant out of your house, and keep them all in prison while the case is investigated. The investigation occupies days, if not weeks, and during that time you are utterly lost and helpless. In the end, you are glad to abandon your prosecution, and take your old servants back again as if nothing had happened.

But on the whole, you will meet with less dishonesty up the country, than in Calcutta; in neither place will the cares of your establishment cause you much domestic disquiet if you use some little care in the selection of your servants, and know how to manage them when selected. The art does not need any great experience to acquire. It consists principally of regular pay and judiciously kind treatment, which will be found to go even farther in India than elsewhere.

III.

INDIAN SERVANTS.

EVERYBODY in India has servants—every European, at any rate. There is no such arrangement known as depending upon the servants of other people, as do bachelors of moderate means, and others who choose to live in lodgings in England. A native will not serve two masters—at least, not avowedly. He has been sometimes known to take two salaries under the rose, and to divide his attentions between two persons—but in such a case the dishonesty compensates him, I suppose, for the unnatural character of the proceeding. As a general rule, the humblest of Europeans in India employ natives still humbler to do their bidding. If a gentleman keep an European man-servant—a very rare occurrence, by the way—that man-servant will keep at least one native, to whom he stands in the proud

relation of master. And if a lady keep an European maid—which is much more frequent—that maid will have her native *ayah* almost as a matter of course. Even soldiers in barracks do not attend upon themselves as they do in England. Cavalry troopers have a certain number of *syces* assigned them to look after their horses; and in the infantry, also, natives do a great deal of the rough work for the men, who have an easy time of it compared with their daily experience in this country. In India, in fact, everybody has a subordinate—the native servants themselves finding others of a lower class to do their bidding. In England, Captain Absolute lords it over Fag, and Fag lords it over the Boy: in India, the boy has somebody to lord it over too, and the boy's somebody has *his* victim.

You may suppose, therefore, that an Englishman in India who happens to be a gentleman —or to occupy the position of one—has a little troop of dependants always at his back. They are a great nuisance at first. He does not know one from the other, so much alike do they look. But as a shepherd makes the individual acquaintance of his flock by degrees, so does the English

master gradually recognize the natives in his pay, and reconcile himself, after a time, to being followed and watched about, and receiving assistance which he does not require. An Englishman, upon his first arrival in Calcutta, still indulges in his home idea that he is competent to retire to rest without the co-operation of any other individual. But he finds, at the outset, that he is not master of his own actions in this respect. The personal attendant whom he has engaged in the morning is not so easily to be thrown off at night. The idea of walking up-stairs with a flat candlestick, and locking himself in his bedroom, is too preposterous to be entertained. There is no such thing as a flat candlestick to be had, in all probability, and it may be that the room has no door more decided than a curtain. However, the apartment is sure to be well lighted up, and is destined to remain so all night; and the servant, who insists upon superintending his master's night toilette, down to the minutest particulars, sleeps on the mat outside, so that the arrangement is a cheerful one after all. On getting up in the morning, the master finds himself subjected to a similar ordeal. The attention bestowed is very different from the forbearing

courtesy of an European valet, being aggressive and highly irritating to a new arrival. Of course the master is not allowed to shave himself—there is a barber in attendance, who takes care of that, and who will shave him before he is awake if he so desire. Indeed, I have known many men who never had any anxiety about their beards through a happy acquiescence in this plan. In the matter of his bath, an Englishman is very apt to consider himself a free agent; but even this privilege is looked upon, I believe, with a jealous eye, native servants having a dread of allowing their master to be independent in any way of their help, or, rather, of that vague kind of superintendence which they claim to exercise over all his actions.

The new arrival incurs considerable hazard in his selection of servants in the first instance. Not only do their numbers render it out of the question for him to communicate with the former masters of those who present themselves as candidates, but the masters themselves move about so much, that it would be a work of infinite labour to find them, even if they are to be found at all. To provide for this difficulty it has become the custom to bestow upon every servant,

on dismissing him, a *chittee*, or letter, testifying to his having been in your service, and giving him what we call in Europe "a character." This would be a very excellent arrangement if the character could be relied on, but, unfortunately, it can't. *Chits* (we abbreviate the word in Anglo-Indian circles) are given too indiscriminately; and even were they given only where well deserved, it by no means follows that the right man would always hold the right testimonial. The truth is, that these testimonials are passed from hand to hand, as occasion may require, and are very often made the subject of pecuniary dealings. In the China Bazaar, in Calcutta, they are, I believe, a regular article of merchandise, and may be borrowed or bought by anybody who has occasion for them. As for the unfortunate victim to whom they are submitted, how is he likely to distinguish between the Ramchunders who hold them and the Nubbee Bukhshes to whom they properly refer? An Englishman very seldom troubles himself about the names of his servants. He calls them generally by the names of their respective offices—Bearer, Syce, &c. Their individual designations he may pick up by degrees, as he does their physiognomies, but it is by no

means imperative that he particularizes thus far. It is not always that he troubles himself to consider the dates of the documents, which are in many cases conspicuously inconsistent with the ages of the holders. I was once presented, by a khitmutgar seeking a situation in my household, whose age could not be more than five-and-twenty, with a chit signed by Sir John Shore at the beginning of the century, and certifying that the bearer had served him long and faithfully, and was a person whom he could strongly recommend. Nor should I be very much surprised to have a couple of chits submitted to me, by aspirants for employment, to the following effect:—

"This is to certify that the bearer was in my employment for seventeen years as Khansamah. I found him faithful and obedient, and have no hesitation in recommending him as a good servant.

"CLIVE."

"The bearer served me as a Syce for ten years. I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to his carefulness and general efficiency.

"WARREN HASTINGS."

It is almost impossible to gain a knowledge of

your servants' antecedents. Those already in your employ will not implicate a new comer, even though he be a convicted thief or worse. They hold it to be no business of theirs; neither do they take the same serious view of crime that we are accustomed to take in Europe. Whatever a man is, or has been, it is his destiny, they consider, and he is not to be harshly judged. I heard of a native bearer, since the Mutinies of 1857, who was a particular favourite in the family where he was engaged—especially with the children, to whom his kindness was remarkable. All went well, until one day he was identified as a principal agent in the outbreak at Meerut, where, it seems, he had assisted in slaughtering men, women, and children in cold blood. His connexion with the new family was broken off by his being hanged.

As a general rule, however, it must be said that the natives are faithful to those whose salt they eat. If they swindle their masters a little themselves, it is only in accordance with a custom which they consider to confer something like a right, and, as I have said, they will not allow anybody else to take a similar advantage. Your Bearer, for instance, will relieve you of many

more or less considered trifles which he chooses to think you do not want, and your Khansamah will commit similar depredations in the kitchen; but neither will go out of his department to rob you, except under special circumstances; while either may be generally trusted with money, however large the amount. To trust them in this way, indeed, is by far a safer plan than to lock up against them; for in the latter case they will be put upon their ingenuity to defeat your purpose; and native opinion, looking upon robbery generally in a charitable light, is even more lenient when the offence is committed against the Feringhee. I am inclined to think that many Hindoos and Mussulmans of otherwise sound (Hindoo and Mussulman) morality, look upon it as quite justifiable.

As illustrative of the peculiar views of honesty taken by the native conscience, I cannot do better than recite a case in point. The following letter —which I have preserved among some other curiosities of the kind—was addressed to me at Allahabad, in the year 1860, by a native writer, or clerk, who solicited employment in my establishment, or "department," as he chose to call it, with a view to which he proposed relinquishing

a similar position which he held in a government office. I copy his letter textually. The writer took great credit to himself for his proficiency in the English language:—

"Sir,—I most respectfully beg leave to inform you with these few lines as follows:

"That my earnest desire to know the office hours of your department, whether it is ten to four, or it is any other customs. Because I wish to settle about my lodging, where am I to keep in. My present lodging is near the Chouk. Also I shall feel much obliged by your informing me whether your office department shuts on Sunday as the others does.

"I shall speak to Mr. B. to-day *in a pretence way* to leave my present employment—(following)—*that I have received an unexpected letter from my home, stating my old mother is dangerous ill,* for which I am obliged to go down to Calcutta. And if I submit a letter of resignation without doing the above pretence, I think it can detain me a fortnight more. Therefore I have made my best way in a pretence manner to leave my post within ¾ days by which I can get out my last months salary, but to lose the present can't help; I am

obliged to do so, but I hope I shall have no objection to draw my wages from your department from the 1st of this month ; I hope you will allow me the same and oblige.

"May I request the answer of it by the bearer of this note.

"I am, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

"RAM COOMAR DOSS.

"P.S.—This is my permanent situation; I am going to leave it; I had a great expectation in future, though only by advice of yours to leave it; therefore I beg to state that you have to consider in future for me."

The above, which may not be quite comprehensible to the purely British understanding, meant simply this: the writer wished to leave his situation at once, to enter my service, but desired to make as much as possible out of his old employers before the change. If he left without giving fifteen days' notice, according to law, he would forfeit fifteen days' pay. This he proposed to save by "making a pretence" that "his old mother was dangerously ill," necessitating a journey to Calcutta on the part of her devoted son. By this plea he would get two

or three weeks' leave without the loss of pay, and this time he proposed to spend in my service, giving notice of resignation only when his leave was up. By this arrangement he would still forfeit fifteen days' pay; but then he would be gaining it elsewhere, and in the mean-time he would enjoy the advantage of drawing pay from two places at once. A notable scheme enough; but even under these favourable circumstances he was determined not to cut the ground from under his feet, as is evinced by his precautionary postscript, in which he mentions that the appointment he was leaving was a permanent one, holding forth good expectations, on which ground he desired to impress upon me that I should make up to him the advantages he was prepared to forfeit in the future.

Now I do not mean to say that an Englishman might not be capable of entertaining an analogous scheme for cheating his employers; but I think I am justified in believing that no European would be such a fool as to parade his plan, and think to recommend himself to a new master by exposing his willingness to impose upon the old. The fact is, that this man—a Bengalee—had not the smallest notion that there was any disgrace in duplicity of the kind. It was quite natural to him, and he

conceived that it would be admired by anybody else who was not the loser by the plan; so I fancy I frightened him by giving him a brief sketch of my ideas upon the subject.

"The old mother dangerous ill," I may add, is a very common device among Indian servants; though, less artistic than my friend Ram Coomar Doss, they generally kill their parents outright. Mussulmans and Hindoos are equally addicted to it. If, for instance, Mahommed Ali, my khitmutgar, wants to disport himself for a couple of days among his friends, he has not courage to ask for a holiday—however sure he may be of getting it upon general grounds—but he comes with a very long face and tells me that his father is dead; or if he said his father last month he makes it his mother this month. Next month it will be his father again, and so on. According to his own account, he must have had an unlimited supply of parents to begin with. But though he should be well aware that you cannot believe him unless you happen to be an idiot, the fact does not prevent him from repeating the "pretence" whenever he happens to be without any other. The chits which servants present when applying for employment, sometimes contain a personal description of the proper bearer, in which case

the imposition of the transfer generally becomes manifest, as the transferee cannot read English, and takes no trouble to provide against such a contingency. Thus I remember a little woman of eighteen or twenty, with a remarkably smooth complexion, bringing a certificate describing her as tall, about thirty, and marked with the small-pox. On the discrepancy as to size being pointed out, she misunderstood the point, and said that she had grown taller during the six months she had been out of employment. This made matters worse, of course, and the thirty years and small-pox finished her. However, she took the rebuff quite coolly, merely remarking that she had brought the wrong chit and would go and get another. She went accordingly, but had not courage to come back again; being, I suppose, unusually modest.

Many of the chits with which these people are supplied, are not written by their former employers at all, but are the concoctions of native letter-writers, who get their living by conducting correspondence between their less accomplished countrymen and the Europeans. The natives have a great idea of the dignity and influence of a written communication as compared with an oral one.

Thus, if one of your servants has an application of any importance to make to you, he will frequently make it by means of an English letter, although he would have no difficulty in getting a hearing, and you would have no difficulty in understanding what he said. The scribes, not being themselves, for the most part, very proficient in English—though their handwriting, as a general rule, looks wonderfully European and business-like—sometimes give a very lively idea of their clients' meaning. The following—which I copy from the original—will serve as a sample of the general style of the correspondence. It is a letter from a native servant to his European master, during the absence from home of the latter on duty in the district:—

"Sir,—I beg leave to inform you that at present it rains continually, and consequently I am very difficult to polish the furniture without polishing wax. And rather I have a good news to inform you, sir, that your madam's she goat, Nanny, brought forth two babes last evening; one is male and the other is female; one is black and the other is a white spotted one; *so* I am trying my best to take care of them, taking much pains from the dangers come to happen, that is the neighbouring dogs and guanas frequently coming to devour them, which is

prevented by my lovely attendance, and sleeping near them at night.

"Sir, please give the information of this intelligence to our mistress.

"Sir, please send me the expense for the animals, and also I like to have some money from my wages for my expenses, sir.

"Your most obedient servant,

"C. D. CAROLIR APPOO."

The accounts which you receive from your servants are always written by these scribes, who have sometimes the merest scintillation of scholarship to guide their lonely way in the language. A bearer of mine up country used to employ an old cripple, who had only a very vague smattering of English, to translate his accounts for him. Most wonderful things appeared monthly. A small donation to a native Christian was thus entered:—

"Charities for the drunken beggar . . 1 R."

Another item was as follows:—

"For one wine screws . . . . . 1 R."

I suppose he meant a corkscrew.

Cash was always thus noted:—

"Sir, I give, you take . . . . . 4 Rs."

The amanuensis always concluded with a brief allusion to himself, generally in the following terms:

"The above written by one deserving poor man, and one pony by reason of bad legs, with very children."

The inconsequential nature of this appeal is equalled only by the remark of the judge:—

"Prisoner at the bar, Providence has blessed you with health and strength, *instead of which* you go about the country stealing ducks."

One letter which I received from a native servant, concluded with this salutation—"I remain, sir, your beautiful bearer, Durwasah Doss."

Correspondence between natives is generally a much more simple affair than where an European is concerned. The better classes write through the post, as we do; but the poor cannot afford this luxury, though the charge for a letter, not exceeding something like a quarter of an ounce, is only a half-anna, or three farthings sterling. The Ooriah bearers in Calcutta have a very primitive way of managing such matters when they want to communicate with their families in the country. They write on a leaf, with an iron style, and ask the first person they meet walking that way to pass it in the direction of Cuttack. The droll part

of the arrangement is, that the letter always arrives in safety.

I mentioned just now that my bearer described a native Christian, to whom I had given a donation, as "the drunken beggar." This may, of course, have been a little piece of prejudice; but I am afraid the epithet is not unlikely to be deserved. The Christian converts are not always among the most respectable of the native community. Complete outcasts from their own countrymen, they have no great congeniality with Europeans, and, unless well taken care of, they are very apt to relapse, and become completely demoralized. Indeed, a native Christian usually considers that the Europeans are bound to provide for him in return for his conversion, and not a few, there is every reason to believe, embrace Christianity with this special end in view. Doubtless there are many sincere converts; but even these are reduced to so helpless a condition, if left to themselves, that their claims upon European sympathy cannot be denied. As, however, it is found difficult to satisfy every native who may honour us by changing his religion according to his own ideas, we find them here and there unprovided for, subsisting by begging, and with no other consolation than getting drunk.

It may be asked, why not employ them in domestic service? Some few persons do, but the plan is attended by many difficulties. In the first place, the Christian is sure to get bullied beyond all bounds by his Mussulman and Hindoo fellow-servants. To get a complete establishment of Christians would be no easy task, and, even in the event of success, a new difficulty would arise. A Christian khansamah would be so badgered in the bazaar that the supply of food for the family would be most precarious; and few persons, however favourable to Indian missions, care to run the risk of being starved three days in the week. Moreover, unless you managed to convert all the neighbouring water-carriers, your supply of that necessary element might be cut off at any time. There would, in fact, be a dead set made against a Christian establishment, which could never be kept in working order. For these reasons we find that very few persons venture to employ Christian servants. The great majority will get them situations as clerks or teachers; will grant them gratuitous pensions even; but they will have nothing to do with them in their own houses, unless they wish to have the said houses made too hot to hold them—a very unnecessary arrangement in India.

There is another class of servants which judicious masters avoid as much as possible. I mean natives who speak English. I here allude principally to Bengal; in Bombay and Madras the accomplishment is more general, and is not attended with the same inconvenient results. The new arrival at Calcutta is very often tempted to take the first man who offers himself with this recommendation. But before he has become independent of the aid, he finds out his mistake. The native who talks English—unless he belong to the educated classes—is nearly always a rascal. If not a thief, he is generally a drunkard; and in any case he is certain to set the whole house in confusion. The accomplishment he has picked up gives him, he considers, a peculiar right to his master's ear; and whether the right be recognized by the master or not, its assumption is quite sufficient to render the rest of the servants jealous, and keep the whole establishment in a state of disaffection. The consequence is, that complaints on the one side, and counter-complaints on the other, are bandied to and fro until the unfortunate master finds the burden of life more than he can bear. In this dilemma he has to choose between turning away his accomplished servant or dispensing with the remainder of the

household. The former is the easier course, so the accomplished servant goes. Those men who speak English really have a notion, I believe, that they belong to a class superior to their fellows. I had a servant of the kind once. Pussoo was rather darker in complexion than the majority of the natives, some of whom, in the North-west, are scarcely less fair than ourselves—or than Spaniards, at any rate. Pussoo was nearly as black as one's boots; and I had a theory that he cleaned and shined himself by the same process which he employed upon those articles of wear. But when he had to make any complaint against his fellows, he would never fail to speak disrespectfully of them with regard to their complexion. Thus he would say:—

"You very wrong, master, to pay so much to that man. The more you give to these black fellows the more they want." Or:—

"There no need to give him holiday, sare. His father no more dead dan I am. These black natives, sare, always ungrateful—he think no better of you for all you do for him."

I really believed for a time that Pussoo was sincere and faithful, and looked after my welfare; but I soon found that he merely considered me as his property, and wished to get as large an interest upon me

as possible. It became manifest by degrees that every payment I made through Pussoo was about half as large again as need be—even allowing for the ordinary *dustoor*, or commission—and that the difference went into Pussoo's pocket. He began to get so fat and haughty as to be unbearable to everybody in the house or the compound; and when he added to his other concessions to European civilization the habit of getting into what Mr. Yellowplush calls a "beasly state of intawgsication," there was nothing for it but to get rid of him.

On the whole—making all allowances—I am not inclined to give Indian servants the bad character ascribed to them by some of our countrymen. The stories of the ill-treatment they are said to receive from Europeans, are exaggerations as applied to any period, and have in the present day not much foundation in fact. Occasionally we hear of some disgraceful outbreak of temper on the part of an European, and the death of a native in consequence —for a native, if suffering from any disease, may be killed like a fly. But such cases have always been rare, and are becoming more and more rare. For the rest, any European who strikes a native may be punished for the assault as in England; and the native has begun to find this out, and freely takes

his remedy. Still, without infringing the law, there are many of our countrymen in India who treat their servants with more harshness than is necessary, and they are the persons who are uniformly worst served. Those who practise a system of kindness and consideration, joined to punctual payments, will experience far less trouble in managing an establishment in India than they would incur in conducting an establishment at home. For it is a mistake to suppose that "all niggers are rascals"—even supposing that the natives of India were "niggers" at all—and that there is no such *thing* as gratitude among them, however inadequately the *word* may be represented in their language.

IV.

THE GREAT SHOE QUESTION.

THE Great Shoe Question is being agitated in India. The Great Shoe Question has been agitated in India before. Whenever it is agitated, the agitation is a cheering sign. There are certain luxuries in politics which are never resorted to but when the necessaries have ceased to cause anxiety. The Great Shoe Question is one of these. It was never heard of during the mutinies, when famine was pressing upon the people, or when the financial ends of the country were so shaped that they could not be made to meet. Even during the Nil Darpan discussion nobody troubled himself about the Great Shoe Question. But happier days have come upon us. Authority is restored; the people are fed; "equilibrium" is no name for the prosperous state of the balance-sheet; the Nil Darpan delusion has exploded. India has no longer need to trouble itself

about important questions. Our countrymen can dress, drive, and dine in peace, with nothing in particular to do but to multiply the number of beer-bottles, which satirists assure us are to be the only enduring monuments of their rule. The Golden Age is restored, and has nothing to trouble itself about but the rate of exchange. At such a time as this, active minds find that they can't stand it any longer. They cast about for a grievance, and happy is the community which finds nothing more distressing than the Great Shoe Question. It is to Indian politicians what the ruffled rose-leaf was to the Sybarite. It is a capital excuse, in short, for getting up a disturbance. They are an easy, indolent community, the Anglo-Indians, spoiled children of fortune;—but before we begin to moralize, let us look at home. Are there no political Sybarites in this country—no ruffled rose-leaves of which we hear the discomforts daily discussed? Never mind. Our present business is with the Anglo-Indians. If we have any weaknesses of our own, we may safely leave them to make the discovery.

In the mean-time the reader may perhaps desire to know something more concerning the Great Shoe Question than is contained in the above flippant remarks.

The Great Shoe Question had its origin at a comparatively recent period, and arose out of the conflict of European with Asiatic manners, produced by the closer intercourse of the two races. The circumstances which led to the agitation may be briefly told.

In Europe, we doff our hats upon entering a house; in Asia, they doff their slippers. The arrangement in both cases is dictated by practical good sense. In Europe, we wear a covering for the head which is light and easily removable, and in civil life at any rate, is so ugly that no sane man desires to wear it any longer than he is obliged. The latter may not be the original reason why we *cast* it as an expression of courtesy, but the reason might pass in the present day. It is most certainly, of all articles of costume, the most easily dispensed with. To take off one's coat, for instance, to a lady in the park, as an illustration to a bow, would be inconvenient; and to remove that garment upon entering a house, would scarcely have a graceful effect, if it involved an appearance in the drawing-room in one's shirt-sleeves. As for taking off one's boots, considering that the process can seldom be effected without the aid of machinery, and even then is apt to involve an undignified struggle, I

should like to see the man who would submit to such an infliction whenever he dined out, or made a morning call; to say nothing of the unpleasantness of walking about the house in his corns, and the battle to get the boots on again when he took his leave! The Asiatic is subjected to conditions precisely the reverse. Tell him to take off his turban, and if he be a man of any caste or consideration he will feel simply insulted. The indignity of appearing anywhere but in his bath with a bare head would be revolting to his feelings. Moreover, he very frequently wears a turban composed of from twenty to sixty yards of muslin, upon the folding of which he, or his servant, bestows more attention than Beau Brummel ever bestowed on his cravats. Fashion, as well as dignity, forbid its removal. His feet, on the other hand (if such an apparent confusion of terms be permissible), afford an admirable opportunity for the display of any amount of politeness. As his coat is all dressing-gown, so his boots are all slippers. He walks but little, and when he is not walking his great comfort is to kick his boots off. Comfort and courtesy combined —could there be a happier combination? Thus it is that there is as good reason why the Asiatic should take off his slippers as that the

European should take off his hat, upon entering a house.

The two customs, while dictated equally by practical convenience, have the additional advantage that they do not necessarily conflict. There is no reason whatever why an European gentleman should not hang up his hat in the hall because an Asiatic gentleman has left his slippers on the door-mat. One would fancy that West and East could not meet in greater harmony. But unfortunately the harmony has not always been unbroken. Other things being equal, all would be well; but other things never are equal, and circumstances have from time to time arisen which have caused not a little confusion in the international etiquette.

The Great Shoe Question arose through the rapid development of Young Bengal, of late years, in European education and ideas. The Bengalees, our readers scarcely need be told, are a very different race from the natives of the north of India. They are not fighting animals. They are an easy, oily people, who never undergo physical exertion when they can avoid it; they get fat when they feed well, with the certainty of a pig or a goose; and they always feed in proportion to their income, so a rise in salary among them is almost immediately marked

by an increase in size. Leanness, indeed, is a proclamation of poverty, and a Bengalee seldom sees his toes after he has made his fortune. But, contrary to the ordinary rule among Europeans, inactivity of body does not beget inactivity of mind. The Bengalees are wonderfully quick to learn and acute to comprehend; industrious to execute and facile to adapt. In cunning and craft they are more than a match for any European, and did not the latter throw honesty into the scale, he would have no chance against his Bengalee brother. As it is, "the best policy" gains the day in Asia as in Europe. The Bengalee considers that the European takes a mean advantage of him in this respect, because the weapon is one to which he is unaccustomed; but our countrymen, it is pleasant to think, are content to remain under the imputation, and have not yet consented to fight the Bengalees with the weapons of their choice. The ingenuity of these people has long since been distinguished in arts and manufactures. In their imitation of the productions of European industry, they almost equal the Chinese. Given an article to copy, and they will produce its exact counterpart, from a carriage to a coat. It is true that if they are not looked after, the carriage will be found weak as to the wheels, uncertain as to the

springs, warped as to the panels, and that in a short time it will neither run nor hang, nor do anything (if it has been much in the sun) except tumble to pieces. It is true also that the coat, unless carefully superintended, will be reproduced with any patches or other disfigurements which may have belonged to the original model, and that the garment will come into as many pieces as Mr. Buckstone's in a farce. But these defects on the part of the workman are moral; they do not imply want of skill. On the contrary, considering that he could make an effective article if he would, the deception must be considered a decided test of talent. These are instances of the many ways in which the Bengalee, if he condescended to be honest, could beat the European hollow. There is one business, by the way, in which trickery cannot be introduced, except at the almost certain risk of punishment—this is book-keeping. The Bengalee has an instinctive turn for figures, and the class who cultivate it make the best accountants in the world. Being cut off in a great measure from producing a spurious article, they give us the result of their patience, order, and exactitude, in an unadulterated form. Thus it is that while, for some departments of manufacture, nobody will employ native workmen who can command

European, most persons engage native accountants as a matter of choice.

The same facility possessed by the working classes in the imitation of European articles of manufacture, is marked in their educated countrymen by the reproduction of European manners and ideas. The result is about equally superficial in either case, but it is certain that the new generation of Bengalees—Young Bengal, as they are collectively called—display immense facility in the acquirement of both our language and our literature. Their knowledge is acquired mainly through their talent for imitation; but it is sufficient to make a very fair show either in conversation or writing. Its depth may be estimated from the fact that they learn the peculiarities of the language, almost before they learn the language itself. Young Bengal may blunder wofully in grammar, but he will make use of the current phrases of the day as if he had just stepped out of a London club. If a member of parliament or a journalist employs a phrase which catches the public, Young Bengal will have it at his fingers' ends before it has half gone the rounds of the press. Thus he would tell you gravely during the Crimean war that it was absolutely necessary that we should have "the right man in the right place;"

also that a "dismounted dragoon is about as effective as a swan on a turnpike road." An anticipated event he would describe as "looming in the future;" and in a very short time, I would lay a moderate wager, he will be informing his European friends that the "bloated armaments" which we maintain are more than the public purse can bear. His handwriting is another illustration of the imitative nature of his talent. He may be guilty of a hundred faults of orthography in a single letter, but that letter will have nothing of the schoolboy about it, as far as appearance is concerned. The penmanship will display a determined character, such as he has observed in the caligraphy of official men, and it is always sure to be what people call "gentlemanlike" in its style. Some Bengalees are of course more proficient than others, both in conversation and in writing; but even the most ignorant student of English will be tolerably certain to have our mannerisms thoroughly at his command.

Young Bengal, besides writing letters, occasionally prints them. Nay, more. Besides letters, he prints articles—literary articles, political articles, articles upon every conceivable subject, from some question of Hindoo theology to Lord Derby's last

speech in the House, or the Emperor Napoleon's last move in Europe. Some of his prolusions are crude, others almost incomprehensible, but they never fail to exhibit a certain "knack" of falling in with English forms and conventionalities of expression, which indicate close, if not acute, observation. If the editors of the local journals chose, they could fill their columns with "leading articles" contributed by Young Bengal. These are generally written with due regard for journalistic observances, but occasionally the writer betrays himself, as the lady did who undertook to edit a newspaper, in opposition to another lady who conducted a rival publication. The pair attacked one another for some time in a strictly parliamentary manner, contenting themselves with such modes of expression as, "we differ from our contemporary," "the writer is misinformed," &c.&c.,—until at last one of the fair editors, stung by some severe sarcasm, put forth a rejoinder, in which she said, "This pert puss should be aware that," &c. &c. The mystery hitherto observed was of course at an end; she proclaimed her own sex and that of her rival. In the same manner Young Bengal occasionally forgets himself, and comes out with some gross or grotesque image which marks the Asiatic origin of the composition; but for the

most part he manages the disguise wonderfully well, and is not much more misty in his style than the British writer sometimes is himself.

Young Bengal, not content with talking and writing English, and reading Shakspeare and Milton in the original, has of late years taken to eat beef and drink champagne and brandy-panee, besides smoking Manilla cheroots. All these proceedings are strictly contrary to his religion, but he is not particular, and is fast becoming too philosophical to have any religion. For be it observed, that although a bad Hindoo, he never shows any sign of becoming a good Christian, or even a bad one—and the policy of our rule does not permit the smallest suggestion towards that object on the part of his European teachers. This is a delicate subject, however, and has nothing to do with the matter in hand. What I was coming to was this—that Young Bengal, from talking, reading, and writing English, has advanced so far as to eat beef, drink champagne and brandy-panee, and smoke Manilla cheroots, and further, that he has of late years made an additional stride towards Europe by wearing Wellington boots. It is thus that he has become connected with the "Great Shoe Question."

It is very likely that in his enthusiasm Young

Bengal would have adopted European costume entirely, but for the inconvenience of the arrangement. One can scarcely fancy a native of India, who has been used to the perpetual déshabille of Oriental costume, being fool enough to make a finished toilette. Young Bengal, if he tried the experiment, must have found it a failure, for it is certain that he has addicted himself to no article of European attire but the boots. In these same boots he used to go stamping about in public places, in a state of great pride; but when he presented himself thus equipped at Government House, a difficulty arose. So very ordinary a piece of courtesy as the removal of the slippers in the verandah had never been omitted, and the attendants saw no reason why the boots of Young Bengal should lead to a breach of etiquette. But how to get them off, was the difficulty. There were no boot-jacks at hand, and if there had been, it was felt that to produce them would have rather a ridiculous effect. So, as Young Bengal's boots could not be got off, he was allowed to keep them on, and the British power consented to pocket the affront. But the real difficulty was to come. Native gentlemen, seeing that the wearers of boots were privileged, saw no reason why the wearers of slippers should not be privileged also. They accord-

ingly struck, and refused to go barefoot into the presence. The natural alternative was put to them—if they did not choose to uncover their feet, like Asiatics, they might have the option of uncovering their heads, like Europeans. But the latter idea was not to be thought of. The indignity was such as no native gentleman could survive. Considering that the shedding of the slippers is not an act of submission or of deference amounting to an admission of inferiority, but a mere form of courtesy founded upon convenience, meaning neither more nor less than the doffing of the hat in England, which a nobleman will do in a gamekeeper's cottage—it was a little too much to expect that the Governor-General would submit to this settlement of the question.

In the East, where the luxuries of life rank among the necessities, social trifles become matters of serious political import. Lord Dalhousie well knew that any dignity which he neglected to maintain, would dwindle away, and leave him in the well-known position of majesty stripped of its externals. This was more than the British power could bear, with any number of bayonets. All the king's horses and all the king's men could never set up the pro-consulate Humpty-Dumpty, when it had once

dropped from its dignity. The representative of Britain saw that the time had come to act. The course of action to be adopted was the next question. He had the giant's strength; he might use it like a giant; but was such a policy desirable? The representative of Britain thought not. He had the hand of steel; he drew on the velvet glove. He had the fortiter in re; he adopted the suaviter in modo. He issued an order that natives who dressed like natives, and wore slippers, should leave the latter on the threshold, according to native custom, on pain of not being admitted to his presence; but that natives who conformed, to a partial extent, to the fashion of European costume, might retain their boots if they chose to do so. If they wore hats they must doff them; but the turban, or pugree, not being meant for removal, it might in any case be retained. I believe that the article relating to the boots contained a stipulation to the effect that they could be retained only when surmounted by European pantaloons, strapped down; by which provision the privilege was placed in its true light—as a concession to convenience rather than an extraordinary favour. However this may have been, all parties appeared to be satisfied with the arrangement. The wearers of slippers resigned those articles as heretofore at the

threshold; and the wearers of boots, finding that they gained no particular dignity or importance by parading them at Government House, ceased to do so to a considerable extent. The Wellington of Europe may still be heard to creak occasionally on native feet in the Viceregal presence; but Young Bengal, for the most part, meets the representative of the sovereign upon the old footing—that is to say, shoeless.

The question, thus happily set at rest, was revived a short time since at Bombay, in consequence of an order which may be considered just a little injudicious. It appears that the income-tax commissioners of that presidency took umbrage at the want of respect shown by many of the natives who appeared before them to make their returns. The said natives actually came into the presence of the high and mighty with covered feet! The official dignity was roused, and an order issued rendering the doffing of the slippers compulsory. The result was, very determined resistance on the part of the natives, and very considerable confusion on the part of the commissioners—for they had imposed a rule which they evidently had no power to enforce. The income-tax commissioners represent neither majesty nor law; they are simply executive officials sitting

in an office. If they have any complaint to wage against the persons who appear there on business, they can simply return the names of the offenders, who must be dealt with by other authority. They have no more right to make a complaint against a native of Bombay for not removing his slippers in their presence, than the officials at Somerset House have a right to make a complaint against a native of London for not removing his hat. The omission in either case is a piece of bad taste and bad manners, but it is nothing more. It is not analogous to the case of a man, either in Bombay or in London, who might refuse to doff his slippers or his hat in a court of law. How the dispute has been adjusted, or whether it has been adjusted at all, does not appear; but it is scarcely too much to suppose that an amount of respect which satisfies the Governor-General in Calcutta should satisfy the income-tax commissioners in Bombay. That these gentlemen are not quite so easy to please, seems evident from the fact that they demand the attention in question at the hands—or rather at the feet—of the Parsees, who generally wear English shoes. The Parsees are the most loyal and respectable class in the presidency, and any resistance on their part to the demand is not likely to be dictated by bad feel-

ing. To them, therefore, every consideration is due. With regard to other classes, there is quite sufficient ground for forbearance, in the fact that the income-tax was the most unpopular measure of finance ever imposed upon India.

V.

THE GARRISON HACK.

I.

A WARM afternoon in Bengal. No uncommon event, you will say. Well, I suppose you may look for it once in twenty-four hours during the greater part of the year. But the afternoon I refer to is warmer than usual, for it is near the end of July, and there is a lull in the rains, which have disappeared for the last two days, instead of pouring down a deluge, as in duty bound.

A traveller pacing the verandah of a staging bungalow, on the Grand Trunk Road, a little below Benares, does not seem to like it. He is very foolish to pace the verandah, for he would be much more comfortable on the couple of chairs which his servant has placed for him. I say two chairs advisedly, because of course he would want one for his feet. But he is of an age, apparently,

when a man has not always learnt the virtue of patience. He may be thirty or thereabouts, and at thirty or thereabouts many men are quite as young as many other men at eighteen, and, being as young, are likely to be as active and generally erroneous. So he prefers pacing the verandah and making himself much hotter than need be, because he wants to go on and is obliged to wait; the state of the case being that at this part of the road he is subject to a change of coachmen, and there is a lull in this article as there is in the rain. He was off with the old love an hour ago, and will not be on with the new for a couple of hours to come. In answer to inquiries, he has been repeatedly told that the driver is at his dinner, but will be forthcoming at five o'clock. It is now only three. These Bengalee dinners seem to last all day.

He is a handsome man, this said traveller, and his beauty is of a style which is appreciated most in the East. He has a fair skin, light blue eyes, a straight nose, and a mouth—but they must have been very intimate friends who had seen his mouth for some years past, for it is effectually concealed by an unusually vigorous growth of straw-coloured hair, which stands out bravely

towards the shoulders, terminating in an agreeable twist. Its owner is not tall in figure; he is rather short, in fact; but he is well built, neat and compact, and would have made an admirable jockey or Light Cavalry man.

The scene which our traveller surveys is of a not uncheering character, though silent and unpeopled. The bungalow at which he is resting is the only house to be seen for miles round. It is built on the model of all the other dâk bungalows on the road—such, at least, as remain in these days of rapidly-advancing railways. It is a comfortable-looking building, with a great thatched roof, situated close to the highway, but standing on some ground of its own. On one side is the cookhouse and some stabling, and hard by is a tope of mango-trees, giving a pleasant shade, apparently for the promotion of smoking hubble-bubbles, upon which occupation several half-naked natives are actively engaged. Everywhere vegetation is luxuriant, and the general aspect of things is green as green can be—a legacy left by the rain.

Drawn up close to the verandah is the dâk gharee in which the traveller has arrived. The baggage is still piled on the top, only a few toilette accessories having been removed. A person climbing

on to the roof and turning over the portmanteaus might make himself acquainted with the fact that the name of their owner was Rocket, and that he was a Lieutenant in a Native Infantry regiment of the late East India Company—the days that I am bringing to notice being days when the Company was a power in the land, and the Company's army a flourishing service, unscathed as yet by either Mutiny or Amalgamation.

The heat, as I have hinted, was very great, and it was wet heat, which to most Englishmen is worse than dry, the majority, I think, preferring to be roasted rather than boiled. Mr. Rocket had tried the usual remedies prescribed by impatient and impulsive persons—that is to say, he had tried brandy-panee and a cheroot, and there being no other remedy at hand, he tried another cheroot. He was just lighting the latter weed (a monster number one), and wishing the coachman at all kinds of Baths and Jerichos, when the notes of a horn, accompanied by a clatter of wheels, were heard, and another dâk gharee came helter-skelter into the compound.

II.

The new comer was not long in alighting, and while he did so Mr. Rocket discreetly retired out of eyeshot, for it was just possible that there might have been another occupant of the gharee in the shape of a lady; and, as ladies in India do not always look quite presentable when travelling by dâk, gentlemen in India make a point of sparing their feelings as far as possible. The new comer, however, was alone, though he told the servants he had a friend on the road whom he had outstripped, owing to the unexpected alacrity of his horse during the last stage. Having ordered his luggage to be taken into a vacant room, he commanded a couple of chairs to be brought into the verandah, and, seating himself in true Indian fashion, took a survey of the scene I have noted, thus affording any person present a good opportunity of taking a survey of him. He was a tall man, of something more than forty, a trifle yellow and a trifle withered, and his cleanly-shaven face, the neatly clipped mostauche alone excepted, contributed to the sternness of aspect which he seemed to cultivate. I may as well here mention that his name and style, as described on his

baggage, were Major Martingale, and he was also of the Army of the Hon. the East India Company. Majors are generally nervous and fidgety—or, at least, they were in the days before that anomalous rank was held by young gentlemen of five-and-twenty—and our Major seemed no exception to the rule. His preoccupation, whatever it was, gave him an abstemious turn. He took a simple glass of soda-water, but not for him was the companionship of a number one cheroot. If he ever smoked at all, he certainly did not upon this occasion, but sat with his arms folded, indulging only in his own thoughts.

But his reverie was not very profound. He soon noted the younger traveller, who appeared every now and then in sight as he once more paced his verandah. The pair eyed one another steadily at first, then more directly, and presently both gave a half-puzzled look of recognition. The difficulty, however, was at once terminated by the Major, who rose and stepped into the other verandah, and shook the younger officer cordially by the hand.

Acquaintanceships are soon made in India. The pair in the present case had met once before —some years previously—at a mess dinner, and

they had heard of one another five hundred times since, in the course of service duties and social gossip. They were now as free as old friends, and chattered as men only can, on such short notice, who have interests, and hopes, and friends in common. The inevitable question—"How's promotion?"—was soon asked and answered on both sides; the dialogue being rife with such words as "steps," "bonuses," and other technicalities, with which I will not trouble the reader. Mr. Rocket had not been quite fairly treated in a certain buying-out transaction; the Major had not got on very well with his Colonel, and the senior officer (as senior officers usually are) had been supported at Head Quarters, the distinguished members of the staff of which were described in the course of conversation—I hope not in strict justice—as the most insufferable set of toadies that had ever lighted upon this orb. From this fascinating "shop" discussion the pair passed to social subjects, and some personal scandal gave additional piquancy to the dialogue.

Rocket had just come from Cawnpore, and the conversation presently turned upon the society of that station. Martingale had not been there for years, except during the past month, which he

had spent there upon leave. He had been for some years past with an Irregular Corps on the north-west frontier. He was, therefore, as greedy for gossip as any old lady of either sex you ever saw. His brief intercourse with a "man about India" had the effect of wine upon him—he visibly warmed up. The talk, I regret to say, became frivolous in the highest degree, and from men it passed to women, as a matter of course.

III.

"You were at Cawnpore last year, I think you said?" the Major presently remarked. "Of course you knew the Brigadier?"

"The old Brig—old Crupper? Of course I did; acted as his Brigade Major, and should have got the pucka appointment but for my rank—and—and—well, I don't mind saying—a lady had something to do with it."

"What, his wife?"

"No; a young lady staying in the house."

"Ah! then you have met Miss Barmecide?"

"Met her, my boy! I should like to know who

had not met Bella Barmecide anywhere between the Himalayas and Cape Comorin. Why, she is as well known as the Adjutant-General."

"I have heard of her," rejoined the Major, carelessly. "Do you know her precise position in the Brigadier's family? She was no relative, I believe?"

"Not the slightest—that is to say, I do know what her precise position was—I mean that she was not the slightest relative. She was the daughter of a Brevet Captain, who died at Bayswater, after taking a premature pension. She was celebrated from her birth. Barmecide began life by marrying in England while a mere boy, as you may suppose. His interest was in India, so out he came to this country, to get a cadetship if he could. He found he could, and got one; but his child was actually born before his appointment. It was the only instance ever known of an unposted Ensign's baby, compared with which dead donkeys and dead postboys are as plentiful as blackberries. The specimen was considered so rare that I believe it was sent round the station on view, with a circular, to which the residents were requested to subscribe the word 'seen.' The young lady grew up,

you may be sure, faster than the papa's promotion, and the usual consequences followed, including Bayswater; that is to say, papa could not stay in the service on account of debt, and sought that refuge for small pensioners which has taken the place of Tyburn, or very near it, at any rate. He died soon afterwards, as I told you."

"And the mother?" asked the Major.

"Well, she died soon after. They talk about the unhealthiness of the Indian climate, but any climate is unhealthy when you have no money; and, as the widow of a Brevet Captain, you may guess she had not much. My opinion is that English poverty kills sooner than Indian plagues: and it is a disease that tells quicker on the constitution, because you can get no sick-leave. What a glorious thing it would be if you had nothing to do when you get impecunious in England but call in the family doctor, and get him to sign a certificate that you positively required change of exchequer — something more bracing in the way of income, or more salubrious in the way of receipts—which would be forthwith provided by a grateful Government, just as we get our trip home whenever we want it. Depend upon it, even in this country, the remedy in specie

would be sometimes more effectual than the remedy in kind. You must excuse me, by the way, for talking in such a cold-blooded style of the death of this unhappy couple; but I never saw either of them in my life, and cannot be expected to have more feeling in the matter than one has for the list of departures one reads every morning after the Births and Marriages in the *Times*."

The Major was not inclined to take a harsh view of the levity of his companion, and as he seemed interested in the fortunes of the family, Rocket, having lit another number one, and supplied himself and his companion also this time with a "peg," proceeded with his little history, which the reader must allow him to tell in his own way.

IV.

"Well, Bella—we all called her Bella, you know—after skimming as much cream off an education as the skyblue of a semi-fashionable school would afford, was placed under the care of a lively aunt, who paid not the smallest attention to her, and who got rid of her once and

for all by shipping her off to India. This she managed without much trouble or expense. The Cruppers agreed to receive her, and let her live with them until she got married, if the aunt would send her out. So the aunt was kind enough to pay her passage-money by the P. and O., and launched her into deep water under that anomalous kind of guardianship known as the 'care of the captain,' who has usually a dozen or so of young ladies so placed every voyage, and who has all the passengers under his care, if you come to that. Bella was the mildest of girls in England; but there is nothing like sea air to bring out truth and nature. There are many persons, I believe, whose characters may be said to be written in invisible ink so long as they remain on land; let them loose on a voyage, and they come out in bold relief, as before a blazing fire. Bella Barmecide was one of these. She began to flirt before she was out of Southampton Water, and she was flirting when she reached Garden Reach, at Calcutta; nor did she leave off then, as I suppose you know, if you have heard much about her. She was desperately ill in the Bay, as most young ladies are; but the ruling passion was superior to sea-sickness, and

she made her malady as powerful a weapon as anybody else would have made her health. When a girl is fit for nothing else, she can generally become 'interesting,' and when she ceases to amuse, she can, at any rate, excite sympathy. Bella made the most of her opportunities, you may be sure; and, by remaining quiet at first, kept curiosity, at least, alive. By the time we reached Gib, she was doing immense execution in the languid line, and by the time we got to Malt* she had established a complete empire over the admirers of vivacity and dash. By this time she had several promising flirtations on hand. There was a young Ensign and an old Major; an elderly Lieutenant and a youthful Colonel; a Judge with no liver to speak of, and a General in much the same predicament as regards character; a merchant who, after forty years of Calcutta, had discovered that his native air didn't agree with him, and was going back again; and a travelling gentleman, who, it was whispered, was leaving his country for his country's good;—all these were among her devoted admirers, besides the ship's officers, whom she found it convenient to encourage, on account of the many little advan-

* "Gib" and "Malt" are military for Gibraltar and Malta.

tages they procured for her. Among her *clientèle* she succeeded in inducing a very healthy state of jealousy; and, not one being on speaking terms with any of the rest, they had no opportunity of comparing notes as to the relative degree of encouragement she had given them. She did not disdain having a quiet understanding with a judicious selection of the stewards, whose marked attentions to her excited loud remonstrance from the less impressionable passengers; and she had made even a little native cabin-boy her devoted slave. I found him one day bringing her a special cup of coffee between meals (a proceeding strictly disallowed by the laws of the ship), and accompanying the presentation with a precocious leer and the insinuating salutation of 'Nice missee!' This story, to be sure, when it got about, somewhat disconcerted her, and I did not observe that the little blackamoor's attentions were ever renewed. For the rest, I believe she had about a dozen doubtful, and some two or three bonâ fide, offers on the way out; but the last she ruthlessly rejected, her little game being strictly in accordance with the advice of the lady in 'The Beggar's Opera' —by keeping men off to keep them on. And all this time she looked so innocent and artless, with her fair fresh face and mild blue eyes, that no one

could have believed how little she cared for any of the men who hung about her.

"Her arrival in Calcutta was not perhaps very glorious. She had made the mistake of cultivating only the male sex, who, of course, could not offer to receive her; and, having incurred by this means the mortal enmity of every lady on board, of course none of these would have anything to do with her. There were two or three married fellows, to be sure, among her particular friends, but even these did not choose to take the responsibility of introducing her at their homes; so she was thrown back, after all, upon her formal protector, the ship's captain, who was glad to drop her at a boarding-house on shore, whence she found her way up country to her friends as she best might. She was just a little depressed, I heard, at this contretemps, but recovered herself on taking her place as the new spin* of a Mofussil station. Here she was all in her glory, and it would be difficult to say whether she made a greater fool of herself or of other people. The old Brig to whom she went out was not a Brig at that time; and whether upon regimental or other duty, he was somehow marched about in a merciless manner. During the five years which elapsed from the arrival

* *Spin*, Indian for spinster.

of Bella to his getting the Cawnpore Brigade, he was at some half-dozen different stations in the north-west provinces and the Punjaub, and Bella contrived to gain additional experience by being asked about on visits; for she found it easier to get people to receive her when she had powerful protectors, though her 'carrying on' was just as bad as it had been on board ship.

"To do her justice, I don't think she cared for any of the men whom she made love to, or whom she allowed to make love to her. She liked the fun, she said; and I believe that was all she did like. As soon as things began to get serious with a man, she cut him, and there was an end to the business. You may be sure that the majority of the men did not treat her with much more respect than she treated them. The jokes about her at the mess were awful; and sensible fellows were at last ashamed of being seen doing spotted dog or door-knocker * to her any longer. But, as most men are not sensible, of course there was no want as far as numbers were concerned. The only man or two to whom she paid any serious attention, I am bound to say jilted her mercilessly, and she was more than once the subject

* *Spotted dog* and *door-knocker*. Riding beside the carriage and calling at the house.

of practical jokes of a rather mortifying character, the authors of which could never be traced. Once, I remember, when a regimental fellow proposed to her, she declared that she would never marry any officer unless he had a Staff appointment. A few days afterwards, when all the station was out in the early morning, a remarkably fine specimen of an adjutant (I mean the bird, of course) was found tied to old Crupper's gate-post, with a pair of spurs attached to his heels, and a label fastened to his leg, after the manner of a presentation turkey at Christmas-time, upon which was inscribed—'For Miss Barmecide.' Everybody laughed, of course, and the joke was communicated by 'our own correspondent' to the *Delhi Gazette*; 'our own correspondent,' I have no doubt, being one of the perpetrators of the mischief.

"At last, affairs began to grow serious. Mamma Crupper, as well as the Brig, remonstrated with her seriously upon the imprudence of her conduct as affecting her prospects in life, and even gave her broad hints as to the pecuniary responsibility which they were incurring on her behalf. This, indeed, began to assume dimensions beyond a joke; for although the aunt had made judicious arrangement with a Calcutta milliner that her bills were to stand over until her marriage, when of course her husband

would pay, the milliner naturally grew anxious. Credit, like art, is long; but time is fleeting, and the Brig received portentous warnings that if Miss Barmecide did not choose to get a husband, somebody else must see to the bills: and this was an alternative that the Brig, who had been all his life in India, was deep in the banks, and had only just begun to liquidate his subaltern's debts, by no means relished. After a great struggle, I believe, Bella condescended to change her tactics. She was in no great hurry to do so, as she imagined that she had but to hold up her finger to have a ring put upon it then and there; but when she condescended to make the experiment, she found she had gone just a little too far; that she had reckoned, in fact, without her host—of admirers. Her fame had so spread, that men had at last grown modest about taking to themselves a lady who was likely, when she bestowed her hand, to make a hundred discontented and one ungrateful; so they fought shy, and when she went so far as to *fish*, they fought shyer still. Poor thing! She was very often discomfited now. I remember one evening, at a station-ball at Cawnpore, she had drawn two or three men round her in the old style (except that the old style was eight or ten), and the conversation on their part having gradually got im-

pertinent (as conversation will do after supper), something was said by somebody about a young lady to whom a very felicitous sobriquet had been applied. She was immediately seized with that uncomfortable suspicion which usually seizes upon women after much flirting; and, turning to the spokesman, she said, 'Now, Captain Holster, tell me, you know it is very amusing to hear one's friends quizzed, but if one young lady is quizzed, it is only natural to suppose that another is quizzed also. If they give Miss Myrtle a name, I suppose they give me one also. Tell me what it is; I assure you I shall not be offended.'

"Holster looked rather confused; but upon Bella telling him again that she should not be offended, that she should rather like it than otherwise, and the men about maliciously pressing him upon the point, he came out sharp with the fact.

"'Well,' said he, 'since you insist upon it, Miss Barmecide, I will venture to tell you that you are called "The Garrison Hack."'

"It was by this name, indeed, that poor Bella was known all over the north-west provinces—Oude and the Punjaub, the hills north of Dehra, and too many other parts of the British possessions in India to be mentioned in a breath. But the communica-

tion was not a pleasant one; she turned pale, and after a minute or two said she should like to join Mrs. Crupper—a proceeding which was never known to take place except as preparatory to departure. I must say I did not envy the poor girl her dreams that night."

V.

"You ask," pursued Rocket, who had had the talking tolerably well to himself all this time, "when I was acquainted with the young lady. Well, it was at Cawnpore, a year ago; and then, I don't mind confessing, that I made a fool of myself, like the rest."

"I should like to know how you managed that?" said Martingale, looking just a little sarcastic.

"Well, you shall," said Rocket, who was more occupied with his own recollections than with his companion, and was talking, I fancy, rather to please himself than anybody else. "Well, you shall. This is how it happened. There was a ball one night—there was always a ball at that time at Cawnpore—and Miss Barmecide was there as a matter of course. I had not been long at the

station, but had already been fortunate enough to earwig my way into the post of Brigade Major—only officiating of course. My duties took me a great deal to the house, as the Brig held his office there; and somehow I found myself before long as regular an attendant at the tiffin-table as the *tunda moorghee** itself. Sometimes I stayed on all day and dined, and nearly always I was pressed into the service to go out riding or driving with the family, or it might be with Bella alone. As for the brigade business, it got shamefully neglected. The office was fast being transferred to the drawing-room—the whole business being transacted on sofas, ottomans, or anywhere most convenient. As to attending to any etiquette as regarded uniform, I soon gave that up; if the Brig didn't care, why should I? And so things went on very agreeably for a few months, and might have gone on in the same way perhaps for a few years, when it occurred to me one day that I was drifting into dangerous waters, and that there was nothing for it but to take in all sail and work astern, unless I wished to split upon the rock of matrimony, which I now saw plainly ahead. Still, I didn't quite know how the thing was to be done; and in this difficulty I decided that nothing should

* Cold fowl.

be done too suddenly. I accordingly determined upon moderating without exactly changing my course, and trusting to my usual good luck to escape. For, you see, apart from the ridiculous figure I should have cut in marrying the 'Garrison Hack,' I was really compromised at home, and had been since I was a mere boy—cousin, family arrangements, and so forth—you understand; and the thing was to come off as soon as I got my company, and, I suppose, is for that matter. Well, in the mean time, I was a little taken with this girl, I must confess, notwithstanding her foolish way of going on and getting herself talked about; and at the ball I mentioned just now I was as nearly taking the fatal plunge as could well be. It was after supper—of course it was, you will say—and we had just finished a particularly wild *galop*, and having got hotter than anybody ever was before—as well we might, for though the *punkahs* were going, the *thermantidotes** would not work—we had gone out on to the verandah to cool ourselves. The verandah was not cool enough, so we descended into the garden, and there, as we walked up and down a path separated by a row of orange-trees from the

* *Punkahs*—fans hung from the ceiling. *Thermantidotes*—machines for pumping cool air into the room.

house, as well as from the band, which was playing in the open air close to the verandah, the sweet moonlight, and the soft atmosphere, and the charming character of the scene generally, had such an effect upon me that I felt myself suddenly impelled to make a declaration of love. As to what followed, I confess to being a little confused. It was after supper, as I told you, and the air had set my head swimming, coming from the hot room. I know, however, that I could not have said *much*, as to quantity, when I heard myself addressed by name, and the next moment a hand was laid upon my shoulder by a small ensign who could scarcely reach it, but who told me hurriedly that the Brig was ill, and that Miss Barmecide was wanted immediately —to go home. We hurried back accordingly, my head getting suddenly clear, and then I found that just what I anticipated had come to pass. The Brig, without having exactly taken too much, had become indisposed, not exactly through having taken too little. He had no head left, especially in hot weather, for the slightest excess, and, as he could scarcely keep his eyes open, it was desirable to get him away as soon as possible, to save scandal. Accordingly, he and his party were put into their carriage, and I returned to my bungalow very soon

after, with a vague idea of something being the matter. Nor was my idea entirely unfounded."

VI.

"The next day I received a note in the well-known writing of Bella Barmecide, asking me whether what I had said to her in the garden the night before had any meaning, or whether I was only taking advantage of her unprotected condition to trifle with her feelings. I was requested to return an early answer, as it would be 'quite' impossible for us to meet again without an understanding upon the point.

"I never was more puzzled in my life. I had not the smallest recollection of what I had said, but I knew that I had not had time to say much, so that it must have been very strong, whatever it was, to have warranted such a letter. I did not dare reply at once. Fortunately, my business at the brigade office had been despatched early in the morning, the Brigadier keeping his room all day, and relieving me from any further attendance. Bella's letter had been sent to my bungalow, and I found it on my

return to a late breakfast. So I thought I would go over and tiff at the mess, by way of a novelty, and take counsel's opinion of one or two of the steadiest-going of my brother officers as to how I should get out of the scrape.

"I drove over accordingly. The fellows had just sat down when I entered the mess-room, and there was a general chorus of congratulation at my reappearance among them in the day-time; indeed, I had even dined but seldom with them since my appointment to the Staff and Miss Barmecide's affections. But I soon found I was a marked man among them. Some jest had evidently got about at my expense, and I could not but fancy that it had something to do with Miss Barmecide. At last I got hold of one of my more discreet friends, and told him all about the affair of the night before, and the letter I had received that morning. My discreet friend burst into a fit of laughter, and drew me into the verandah, out of earshot of the rest.

"'Be under no fear,' said he, 'of the letter; it's all a hoax; I heard them talking about it this morning at *chota hazree*.* Young Cowslip, the greatest rip that ever missed parade, heard you, as he describes it, *spooning* with Bella, and the result

* Little breakfast, taken early in the morning in India.

has been a little attempt at forgery, which, it seems, has proved successful.'

"The load was off my mind. I was ready to dance with joy. I did nothing more absurd, however, than rushing back to the mess-room and embracing Cowslip with tremendous demonstrations of affection, and telling him and the rest that I had found out their plot, but forgave them all in consideration of my delight at the discovery. The afternoon, I need scarcely say, was spent in thorough enjoyment.

"We sat so late that it was out of the question going to the band, the strains of which were borne upon the breeze while we were yet over our cheroots. Suddenly I remembered that I was engaged out to dinner that night. It was then sunset. There was just time to go home, bathe and dress, and put in an appearance. These processes I punctually performed, and made such haste that I was early instead of late at my destination.

"There was only one person present when I entered the drawing-room—a lady. She was looking over a scrapbook. She raised her head when I appeared. It was—Miss Barmecide!

"There seemed no reason why I should be confused at meeting her; so, though I felt awk-

ward at first, I went up to her and entered into conversation in my old familiar way. To my astonishment, she made no reply, would not meet my eye, but buried herself in the scrapbook, like the ostrich in the sand, as if to ignore anything that she did not see. We were both relieved when our hostess appeared, and other guests began to arrive. Fortunately, nobody noticed that Miss Barmecide and myself were 'cuts;' so no remark was made upon the fact. If anybody *had* noticed it, by the way, they could not have wondered more at the possible meaning than I did myself.

"It was not until my arrival at the brigade office next day that the truth of the matter came out. *There* I found a letter, purporting to come from Miss Barmecide, but of so transparent a character, both as to handwriting and diction, that it would not have deceived me for two minutes. This was the mess hoax. The other letter was Miss Barmecide's genuine missive.

"What followed need not take long in telling. I attempted explanations of my conduct, but they were of no avail. To be sure I did not renew my offer of marriage, which, it seems, I had made in most decided—however brief—terms in the garden; and this, I suppose, had something to do with the

reception of my amende. Poor Bella was furious, so was Mrs. Crupper; and, as the Brig told me that the continuance of our official relations would be inconvenient after what had occurred, I took the hint and resigned. I got leave to the Hills next day, and have never since seen the lady who, but for the hoax played upon me, would most likely be at the present moment Mrs. Edward Rocket, otherwise Mrs. Lieutenant Rocket, by courtesy of the tradespeople."

VII.

Major Martingale made no remark when Rocket had concluded his story. He might have done so, indeed, but the noise of another dâk gharee entering the compound distracted the attention of both gentlemen from the subject in hand. The gharee stopped close to that which was waiting for the Major, and in full view of both him and his companion, who somehow never thought of removing out of eyeshot this time, but kept his seat. A native ayah seated on the top between two portmanteaus, and in the cheerful society of a poodle and a parrot, was presumptive evidence that the occupant was a lady. A great deal had

to be done, however, before the lady could be extricated. Shawls, cloaks, and little boxes and parcels were handed out and taken into the house; and the mysterious directions and running backwards and forwards incident to their removal occupied no little time. At last the lady herself emerged. Her figure was nearly concealed by a large mantle, but a sufficiently coquettish turban-hat, worn without a veil, left no mystery as to her face. It was a pretty face, but had been prettier, being worn at present, and sadly wanting in the charm of good humour. The blue eyes and fair hair alone retained their best looks.

As the lady alighted from the carriage, she turned her head, as if for somebody to help her, and, looking round, her eye met that of Edward Rocket. Both were equally unprepared for the meeting. The lady screamed, and ran into the house. Rocket started to his feet, exclaiming to his companion—

"By Jove, Martingale, it's Bella Barmecide herself!"

"I am well aware of the fact," was the dry reply. "I was waiting for her. I was married to her last Tuesday."

VI.

THE LONG-BOW IN INDIA.

THE long-bow has fallen into disuse as an instrument of war; but as a sporting weapon in society it still holds its own, and as much of other people's as it conveniently can.

There are two kinds of long-bows constantly drawn in connection with India, to which I desire to refer. These are:—

1st. The long-bow drawn for themselves by our countrymen in India.

2nd. The long-bow drawn for our countrymen in India by our countrymen at home.

Let us take them in their proper order of precedence.

In all parts of the British Islands proficients in the use of the long-bow may be found very fairly represented; and our interesting friends in the Emerald Isle have a reputation for drawing the

arrow up to the head. But the most daring among us at home are feeble and clumsy compared with comparatively timid and unimaginative people when once away from the mother country—that is to say, when they talk about themselves. If strange tales are to be told, you may always back travellers to tell them; and of all travellers, perhaps Indian travellers may be considered to bear off the palm. There is one condition, too, under which Indian travellers surpass themselves: that is when, in addition to being Indian, they happen also to be Military. When this combination occurs, you may depend upon it that the force of drawing the long-bow can no further go.

I have known or heard of a great many men in India who have been distinguished by sobriquets either on account of physical or moral peculiarities. There was Codshead Jones, for instance, so named on account of his striking facial resemblance to a certain fish. He had a brother known as Flycatcher Jones, from a pleasant habit of carrying his mouth open; and another brother called Tiger Jones, in consequence of a certain cat-like fierceness of physiognomy. Cheeky Smith was also a well-known character in my time—his description being taken from a vulgar word which I am informed is signifi-

cative of assurance. Another Smith was called Black Smith, on account of the darkness of his complexion; for which, I suppose, he was a little indebted to native blood. For the same reason an officer named Windsor used to be called Brown Windsor, until he said he wouldn't stand it any longer, when he was called so more than ever. There was another officer too, whose remonstrances upon this score brought additional trouble upon his head. His name was Window, and as he was something of an exquisite in his dress, he was generally known as *Beau* Window. The joke, mild as it was, so annoyed him that he changed his name. The designation he chose was Lyon, which he thought quite safe; but the first time he aired it at mess he was called Dandy Lyon on the spot; and the remainder of his life is doomed to the most abject despair. Most men who were in India during the mutinies must have known Lieut.-Colonel Friday, of one of her Majesty's foot-regiments. He was one of the best billiard-players between Cape Comorin and the Himalayas; but that is not to the purpose. What I intended to say was, that he had a brother, and that their witty and facetious friends, in order to distinguish the two, used to call them respectively Friday Week and Friday Fortnight. Among bro-

thers, too, I must not forget to mention the Glasses —Musical Glass and Mrs. Glass; so called on account of their talents for singing and cookery. Dirty Dickson and Shiny Johnson were other names given to well-known members of the military service, for suggestive reasons.

There was another class of name also in vogue some years ago, which omitted the real denomination altogether. Thus the colonel of a certain regiment was known as The Smiling Cobra; and the colonel of a certain other regiment was never spoken of out of general orders except as The Smiling Tiger. Sweet Billy was the accepted designation for a long time of an officer on the Staff. But one of the most remarkable names I ever heard of was a real one. I will not give it to you literally (indeed, I have very cleverly disguised most of the above); but it was something like Jessamine Higg. Its owner lived in duelling days: and I have heard that he had to go out upon some dozen occasions in consequence of the jests to which his incongruous appellation gave rise.

Of all the sobriquets common in India, however, the majority seem to have been directed at the peculiarities of the Munchausen order—to drawers of the long-bow, in fact; and in order to distinguish

these, the rather direct word "lying" has been profusely employed. Thus you may hear of Lying Brown, Lying Jones, Lying Robinson, and a host of others with a similar distinction attached. Nor can it be denied that the word is applicable to a good many stories going about the three Presidencies, though the word "romancing" would be perhaps preferable to ears polite. The stories are for the most part harmless, and seem scarcely intended to deceive anybody but the teller, who after a time no doubt believes them himself. They generally refer to the physical or moral ascendancy possessed by the hero over his fellow-men; his prowess in the field; his cleverness in controversy, especially when at war with the authorities; his knowledge of wines, and capacity for consuming them; and ditto ditto cheroots; his feats in buying and riding horses; his tremendous exploits in the way of field-sports; and (this you may be sure) the immense execution which he has done in the way of lady-killing—a class of game in reference to which the long-bow is apt to be drawn to its fullest extent.

One of the most amiable and excellent of these social sportsmen was an officer whom I will call Captain Tattle. I never happened to meet him, but his stories are household words anywhere between

the Indus and the Hoogley. Of these I subjoin a few, which may be considered as fair specimens.

Tattle was a loud and incessant talker, and over any table where he might be placed, never failed to let the party know that whether in battling with men or beasts, or in whatever pursuit he might be engaged, he was superior to any man you might mention, or who would be likely to mention himself. Of his prowess in the field here is a sample :—

"The fact is, sir, that when I am in action, nothing can restrain me; and nobody knew this better than Napier. Before an engagement began, he always sent for me, and said, 'Now, Tattle, you know my wishes; moderation above all things, my boy!' 'I will do my best, Sir Charles,' was my usual answer; 'but you know I cannot always answer for consequences!' At Meeanee I remember in particular he had his eye upon me; and when he saw me up to the elbows in slain—all off my own sword, sir!—he sent an aide-de-camp to me. 'Very sorry, sir,' says the aide; 'but you are to give your sword to me, by the General's orders. I am not putting you under arrest,' he added, laughing; 'but you are really doing too much.' Well, there was no help for it; so I gave him up my sword. But directly his back was turned, I fell to work

with my scabbard, and finished off seventeen more of the rascals—seventeen! I counted them as they lay on the ground. And this is no lie, sir."

The latter somewhat necessary assertion was the usual reinforcement to his most astonishing revelations.

If Tattle went after a tiger, it was always a tiger such as no man had ever been after before.

"There was a beast in the Nepaul Tarai, sir, that I was three seasons in potting. He was the terror of Oude, and Rohilcund was afraid to go to bed when he made an excursion into that province. He was twenty-three feet six inches and a half from the point of the nose to the tip of the tail. His teeth were as big as tomb-stones, and his roar was like an eruption of Vesuvius. The first two seasons I had put some lead into him, but never in a vulnerable place. The third season I met him again—and he knew me, sir. By this time I had found out that an elephant was worse than useless; so, leaving my howdah, I went to encounter him on foot. You see, with a large tiger an elephant only makes a convenient mark to spring at. On foot you can watch your opportunity, and let the beast spring over you. Well, he came on, sir; and I could see by the expression of his eye that he was aware whom he had

to deal with. He could not have spoken plainer if he had said, 'Tattle, my boy, I'm going to be one too many for you this time!' that's what he meant, and I know it. Well, he came on, and I watched him closely. First of all he gave a roar that could have been heard at Cawnpore. I had my double-barrel ready cocked; but I was not fool enough to fire then; a tiger, you know, always throws up his head to roar, and what was my chance of hitting him in the right place? But I kept my eye on him, and saw him quail. Then, recovering himself, he took the spring, upon which I threw myself flat on my face. There was a rush of wind, as if a heavy body was being hurled through the air. The time had come. The tiger had gone over me twenty feet. I knew he would turn to vent his disappointment, and was ready for him before he could recover himself for another spring. A bullet in the brain settled him at once, and the scourge of the Tarai—not to mention Oude and Rohilcund—was no more. I do believe, however, that I should not have killed him that time, but that he had eaten a village the day before, and was rather heavy in consequence. And this is no lie, sir."

This notable sportsman, I have been told, was also the hero of the celebrated story which has been

rendered into verse under the title of "A New Tale of a Tub." Getting the animal under a barrel, he watched till its tail came through the bung-hole. Then, tying that appendage into a knot, he could deal with its owner at his leisure.

If Tattle had to tell of a storm, it was such a storm as nobody had ever seen but himself.

"A storm, sir, such as would have turned you inside out. You should have seen all the pine-trees blown up—shooting round me like arrows—and it's no lie."

He is known to have related the following, as incidental to an occasion of the kind :—

"This occurred, sir, upon the Calcutta course. Martingale, of ours, was driving out with his wife. The carriage was overturned, and he had to sit upon her to prevent her from being blown into Eastern Bengal. As it was, she was left so long on the road, exposed to the fury of the elements, that her hair was turned pea-green; and her foot and her nose were so injured, that she was never able to put either of them to the ground afterwards. And this is no lie, sir."

When Tattle could not make an effect in any other way, he would start a negative peculiarity, and make a point of that. He was as jealous of his

prowess at whist, as at killing men or tigers. Thus, a harmless man at mess, telling of some little triumph the night before, in which trumps were concerned, Tattle burst upon him in this manner:—

"Trumps, sir! who wants trumps? I have made more money at whist than any man of my rank and standing in the service, yet I never wanted trumps. Why, sir, I never held a single trump in the whole course of my life."

"Surely, Captain Tattle, you must have held *one* trump when you dealt."

Most men would have been put down by this, but Tattle was the more on his mettle:—

"The remark just shows your ignorance, sir. Any man who has ever played with me knows—that I always made a misdeal."

Upon the simplest subjects it was the same. Somebody remarked in his hearing upon a breakfast he had been to—a brilliant affair which had lasted half the day.

"Breakfast!" said Tattle; "who eats breakfast? I never ate but one breakfast in my life, and that disagreed with me. Not such an ass as to try another. Nobody but an idiot would dream of eating breakfast."

The mild man who made the remark, wished he hadn't. The rest of the men present, who took breakfast every day of their lives, expressed themselves strongly in favour of Tattle.

There are other men besides Tattle who tell strange stories of India, and who abuse the privilege which travellers have of drawing the long-bow. Many a strong pull is taken in politics. Ranger, of the Civil Service, for instance, would discourse in this manner:—

"My dear fellow, I can assure you that you labour under a delusion in England as to the estimation in which our system is held. A wretched section among the natives don't like it, nor us either. But the great majority of the people know when they are well off, and have the greatest regard for the British, whom they would not exchange for any governing class on the face of the earth. I would undertake to control a district as large as—well, say Wales—without an European regiment within a hundred miles. A few native police is all I want, just to keep up the appearance of order; and but for the planters, and those meddling fellows the missionaries, there would never be a shadow of annoyance from one year's end to another."

Old Colonel Chutney, of the N. I., would take a pull at the weapon in this style:—

"I tell you what it is, sir; Jack Sepoy will go anywhere and do anything, so that he is properly led; and I never heard of any doubt about him, until the country got overrun with Europeans, giving the men new ideas, and making them believe that we had religious prejudices, and all that sort of thing. I only know that I would rather trust my men than any regiment of drunken Englishmen you could give me to command. My men look up to their officers," &c. &c.

Sentiments of this kind have not been quite so freely expressed since 1857; but they are felt for all that; and both civilians and military men are still found occasionally to draw the Company's long-bow.

In social life, you may hear old Indians asserting the superiority of the country in a manner calculated to excite incredulity. Sanguine, for instance, of the house of Sanguine, Ardent, and Co., who has been five-and-twenty years in Calcutta, and has scarcely seen the outside of the ditch, and has had nothing to do all the time but to sit quietly and let his money accumulate;—this is Sanguine's style:—

"Now, I ask you candidly, my boy, did you

ever get such a dinner in England? I won't say a word about the mullagatawny, because that is beyond question. You say we are weak in fish. I don't know that. When the topsee mutchlee is in season, I think we need not fear comparison with Europe; and even now—the salmon, to be sure, has been brought out in tins, and is not quite palatable without vinegar; and the oysters, as you say, must be scolloped, to a great extent, before you can stand them. But look at the cray-fish and the prawn-curry—have you anything to compare with them at home? And, touching the things in tins, anything that Fortnum and Mason can do, can't we take advantage of? Look at the truffled things on the table. The Overland ham, I suppose, is as fine as can be procured in Europe; and the native turkey would do credit to a Christmas in Norfolk. Our mutton—can Wales offer you anything better? In sweets, I grant we are not quite so strong. The jelly is apt to be salt; but the way they manage the ice-pudding,—is it not a credit to Asia? As you say, a great deal of bad wine does somehow make its way out here. The kind of sherry men will accommodate themselves to is surprising, and port is scarcely to be thought of. But the claret is fair, and you *can* get good

champagne, as you know. As for the beer, I tell you, on my honour, that I never tasted beer fit to drink except in India. Beer that has not made a voyage is a barbarous beverage fit only for coal-heavers. Cigars—there, of course, you give in. I flatter myself you never tasted anything like a really good number one Manilla. Throw that away and take another; never smoke them too low." And so on ad infinitum.

The climate will bring out another steady admirer. Hear Grampus of the Irregulars on the subject:—

"The climate the great drawback of India, did you say? The finest climate in the world, sir! Why, every season is a separate enjoyment! When you are tired of the dry heat, you get the rains; and when you are tired of the rains, you get the cold weather."

You venture to suggest that the enjoyment seems to be obtained on the principle of "anything for a change," and that neither the dry heat nor the wet heat can be very pleasant if people are so anxious to get rid of it. You make a suggestion, too, in reference to the hot winds which are prevalent in many parts of the country. This gives Grampus a point:—

"The hot winds, sir! I like the hot winds.

Why, they give you an opportunity to use tatties and thermantidotes, so that you may sit quietly in your room and have all the benefit of the open air. Between the tatties, the thermantidotes, and the punkahs, a man may take his dinner in a gale of wind,—and any man who does not like that must be a fool."

There is no answering such an *argumentum ad hominem* as this; so there is nothing for it but to submit that it is a very pleasant thing to be imprisoned in the house all day and keep yourself cool by carefully catching cold,—to cling on to your papers, if you are reading or writing, to prevent them from being blown away,—and to have your hot dinner almost as well cooled as your wine about two minutes after it has been on the table. You have the consolation, however, of knowing that your friend is drawing the long-bow. It is true, indeed, that you can get very good dinners in India, the material enjoyments of life being easily procurable; but the discomforts incidental to the climate, and especially the restraint and the monotony which they occasion, cannot be disguised. That there are compensating advantages for these discomforts may be supposed, or you would not find old Indians representing them as luxuries. The fact is, that Grampus's theory of en-

joyment is not without foundation. The bath, which is apt to be a bore in a cold country, is the most welcome of stimulants in a warm one; and the enervating atmosphere tends to make most of the remedies resorted to positive instead of merely negative pleasures. For the same reason such common luxuries as wine and beer become doubly welcome to the palate. Moreover, the Indian is able to take his ease to any extent. As a rule, he is a great deal richer than he would be at home; and a large house, a crowd of servants, and a good stud of horses, are powerful aids in reconciling him to his condition.

For the political long-bows I am afraid I cannot find so much excuse. That our rule is the best India has ever known, is true enough. It is just; it is honest; it is conducive to the moral as well as the material elevation of the people. The condition of the great mass of the natives is far better than it was under their own rulers; and they enjoy far more personal freedom, it may be safely assumed, than they would obtain under the rule of France or Russia, one or both of whom would inevitably be in our place were we out of it to-morrow. If any doubt the difference, let them make a very few inquiries concerning the French system in Algeria, which is simply one of military domination — as

arbitrary as a state of siege. It is a system which recognizes discipline as its governing principle, and recognizes very little else. With regard to the mode in which Russia would administer India, Poland may be accepted as some indication. It is scarcely to be supposed that there would be less coercion, less cruelty, or less corruption in the one country than in the other. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the natives of India are not partial to the British rule. They know it is "good for them," but so are a great many things to which even sage persons do not addict themselves. The bulk of the lower orders are probably as contented with us as they could hope to be with any other governing class. But this is not saying very much in our favour; and as men do not uniformly consult their own interests in forming their judgments, it may be supposed that the natives of India have their little prejudices as well as other people. Our natural turn for justice even tells against us with a large portion of the natives, who miss the career formerly open to them through their talents for intrigue, and the various kinds of rascality which procure advancement under an Oriental system of government. The genuine article, in fact, is a great check upon the imagination of those who have been accustomed to make profit

by adulteration; and these form, unfortunately, a very influential class. Our manners, too, it must be admitted, are not generally conciliating; and it is probable that the natives of the country would bear to be worse treated by a people whom they liked better. This, at any rate, may be taken for granted,—that they would prefer a bad government of their own to a good government of ours; and that we must improve their material condition very considerably before we can remove this prejudice (a very natural one), which has existed in all countries and in all times. When I am told, therefore, that India is deeply grateful for "the blessings of British rule," I am certain that the long-bow is being drawn with a view to a very long shot.

But if Anglo-Indians sometimes draw the long-bow for themselves, it is drawn just as often for them, as I have said, by people in this country, who persist in making the most preposterous assertions concerning things Oriental, in spite of denials and disavowals, and proofs to the contrary, which are continually being hurled back upon them with contempt and defiance.

I have heard persons of education and culture in this country express astonishment, on seeing friends from India, that the climate had not darkened their

complexions. "Why, you look as fair as we do!" is a common exclamation. And why not? Those who have been much exposed to the sun, and have happened to survive the exposure, are apt, to be sure, to carry signs of it in their faces; but the effect usually tends towards an agreeable scarlet, and is not for an instant to be mistaken for the local colouring that can come only from the blood. As a general rule, Anglo-Indians are rather paler than they would be had they remained in Europe, and very much more so than if they had been scampering about the Continent, or had lived much on the sea-shore anywhere. When they appear among us at all tanned, you may be tolerably certain that the process has been performed on this side of Suez—unless they have come round the Cape—and that the Mediterranean has had a great deal more to do with the arrangement than the Bay of Bengal or the Red Sea. Ladies in India pride themselves upon the delicate paleness of their complexions, and have established such a standard of beauty in this respect, as to vote the roses of Britain, brought out upon the cheeks of its daughters, rather a vulgar exhibition, to be toned down as soon as possible,—a refinement very soon effected in either of the Presidency towns. The idea that residence in India

has any tendency to make the resident look like a native is surely, therefore, a pull at the long-bow.

It is rather hard, too, upon Anglo-Indians, that when they are not supposed to be brown, they are generally expected to be yellow. The notion, I think, is principally derived from the traditions of the stage, where peppery old colonels, with nankeen trousers, and tendencies towards domestic tyranny, have been represented with gamboge-coloured countenances ever since they have been represented at all. I am inclined to think that the libel must have been induced by the unpopularity of the East India Company, caused by the disclosures made at the trial of Warren Hastings, and the scandalous manner in which the nabobs, as they were called, were supposed to have made the large fortunes wherewith they excited such envy at home. However this may be, it is certain that Anglo-Indians, unless they have been subject to much exposure or very bad health, are no browner or yellower than other people; and that as for their livers (in reference to which there is always much drawing of the long-bow), they have as a general rule, in these days, quite as good livers as any man or woman could, would, or should have: I speak, of course, in their

relation to people in Europe, who have very few advantages over them in this respect.

But the archers of society, not content with drawing the long-bow at the outward characteristics of Anglo-Indians, never fail to let fly their shafts at the moral character of their unfortunate compatriots. In time of peace they are harsh and even cruel masters; while in time of war they are simply inhuman monsters, unworthy the name of Britons, and unfit for any state of society much more enlightened than that of Dahamey! Such is the opinion freely given of a community whose members have the same birth, the same education, and the same religious faith as their detractors; and who are supposed really to have changed their natures with their skies, when they crossed the sea. Persons who think only once, as well as that great majority who never think at all, accept these statements as literal truths; but those who think twice, or give any attention to the subject, soon find that the impeachment will not keep good without a great many grains of salt. That Europeans in India are known occasionally to treat natives—generally their own servants—with harshness, and even cruelty, is true enough; but the fault cannot amount to a practice, or we should hear more

about it; for the natives have the same redress by law, for a blow, that Europeans have, either in India or in this country; and of late years they have been far from backward in claiming their rights. But in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, people who are guilty of violence towards their dependants are not Anglo-Indians, properly so called, but new arrivals in the country, who have not learned to bear with the apathy and indifference of the native character, and who lose their temper through their inability to understand what is said to them, and to make themselves understood. The offenders, in fact, are generally youthful officers, new to the country, who, finding words unavailing, try the effect of a kick; and it is this class also who use the awful epithet "nigger," which causes such scandal among home-bred philanthropists. As a rule, regular "Indians" are attached to the natives, and treat them with every consideration; the only exception being among Englishmen of a low class, who are apt to be arrogant on account of their white skins —the only gentility to which they can lay claim. Against these, the natives (as I have said) have every protection; and the latter are well aware that the magistrate will show no mercy to his

own countryman if he maltreats them. Cases, it must be admitted, occur now and then — at very rare intervals of late years — in which a native has suffered severe injuries, and has even been killed by personal violence inflicted upon him; but in every case the law has severely punished the offender; and it must be remembered, that an ebullition of passion venting itself in a blow or a kick will often kill off a native, while it would fall harmless on an European; so that our countrymen, giving way to their wrath, may easily find themselves committed to consequences upon which they had not calculated. There are ruffians with white faces in India, it cannot be denied; but there are also ruffians with white faces in England, where such offences as assaults find some little occupation for our magistrates, and are even made the subjects of actions at law. But we do not on that account represent the great body of Englishmen as tyrants and savages, and insist that our "society" is in a demoralized condition; and when people make such representations of society in India, they decidedly draw the long-bow.

The more serious accusation of cruelty—which may be called the political part of the charge

—is of comparatively recent origin. It arose out of the unhappy events of 1857, when our tenure of India hung upon a thread, and a handful of English (we were only a handful compared with the millions arrayed against us) were holding out against such desperate odds, that the recollection of the terrible trial startles many a bold man to this day. Men, women, and children, their relatives and friends, were being massacred in all directions, and under circumstances of cruelty, indignity, and dishonour, which required very well-regulated minds indeed to contemplate in cold blood. Most of us in India at that time had not well-regulated minds, I suppose, and gave way to human feelings. There arose naturally a cry—not "for blood," as it has been called, but for justice. There was never a cry for indiscriminate blood, but simply for strong measures, which the government at Calcutta found it inconvenient to adopt. Instead of looking the difficulty in the face, confessing the real character of the crisis, and dealing with it accordingly, the said government denied facts, discouraged feeling, and most impoliticly visited with their wrath those who, conceiving the case to be one in which they had a right to consider themselves con-

cerned, ventured to dispute the wisdom of authority. So far as the said government served the cause of real humanity by their mode of proceeding, they deserve all honour; but, unfortunately, they set about the work in a wrong manner, and the good effected was very small in proportion to the evil. For the best of intentions everybody gives them credit; but I firmly believe that had not the Calcutta people taken measures to defend their lives at the time, they would have been in no position to defend their conduct afterwards. In the Upper Provinces and the Punjab, the servants of government, being to a great extent cut off from control, were taking strong measures in opposition to the government policy. The present Viceroy of India, who then ruled the Punjab, was foremost among these; and by the adoption of a policy which men in Calcutta were called cowards for proposing, saved the province, took Delhi, and turned the scale in favour of the British authority. To Sir John Lawrence, it is now admitted, the credit is due of having saved, not only the Punjab, but British rule in India. That, in the frenzy of success, cruelties were committed by our troops, is true; but it is also true that worse cruelties had been com-

mitted on the other side; and men who know what war is, know that soldiers are savages when fairly aroused,—as indeed are civilians also for that matter,—and that a certain amount of excess cannot be prevented, even in cases of less provocation. The subject is one which might—now that the occasion is past—be avoided with advantage; but I am justified in alluding to it, since a writer in a monthly magazine, who calls himself a "Competition Wallah,"—*i. e.* one of the new class of civil servants in India who have obtained their appointments under the competitive system,—has thought proper to renew the old attack with all the old offensiveness. This gentleman avows himself as very young, and had confessedly no experience of the events of 1857 and 1858. Yet he discusses those events with all the careless confidence of familiarity, such as one might expect from a man who had gone through the changes and chances incident to those eventful years,—now defending a district, now having to run for his life,—except that a man who has to attend to his own business with his head or his heels, has seldom an opportunity of getting other people's business at his fingers' ends. He is of opinion that his countrymen

were unnecessarily alarmed and unnecessarily vindictive. Very humane and enlightened sentiments, no doubt; but rather easy of attainment when the difficulty is all over, and no more responsible duty remains than to prescribe the exact degree of resistance a man may make when a ruffian has a knife at his throat, and the precise modulation of tone which he may adopt in calling for water when his house is in flames. The "Wallah" is a very clever writer; but he would be a much better one if he consented to discuss only things that he knows, or treated things that he does not know with something like decent respect.

The writers in this country, however, who have drawn the long-bow upon the subject, and made it easy perhaps for the "Wallah's" inexperienced pull, are the persons principally to blame. They have been particularly severe upon the alleged unnecessary alarm of the unfortunate Calcutta people, who only took reasonable precautions at a critical time, and whose only failing was that their attitude had a slight tendency to provoke a fight. Of course India has been blamed for their alleged faults, of which it has been presumed their countrymen in England would never have been

guilty. But I suppose it will be admitted that the garotting movement of a few years since was not so serious a matter as the Indian revolt. The garotters most certainly did not out-number the respectable people in this country by many thousands to one. The garotters were not of a different race and an antagonistic religion to ourselves. We were not obliged to employ probable sympathisers with garotters for every duty connected with our households. Garotters' relatives and friends did not cook our dinners, stand behind our chairs while we ate them, nor be in intimate attendance upon our wives and children. Yet the alarm created in London by the garotters very much resembled, in outward appearance, the alarm created in Calcutta by the revolt up-country, and the series of conspiracies known to be at work in the city itself. There was the same rush after knives and pistols; the same suggestive letters in the papers as to the best means of defence; the same denunciations also in the papers of the ruffians who set society at defiance; and the same severe measures proposed for punishing the culprits when caught. In one respect, indeed, the analogy does not hold good; for while the Calcutta authorities prided

themselves upon being calm and unmoved at the crisis, the British Parliament no sooner met than it passed a special act for the repression of the crime; going so far, in fact, as to revive, in the case of the particular class of offenders, a description of punishment abandoned for many years, and inconsistent with the spirit of the criminal law.

But the political immorality of Anglo-Indians is nothing, according to some archers of the long-bow, compared with their social failings. Writers in newspapers and other periodicals are continually telling us that Indian society is awfully lax; that ladies, as a general rule, run away from their lords, and that the lords, in their turn, run away with other people's ladies; that if an Indian officer is able to pay his own debts, it is with the assistance of his neighbour's money, won in a more or less questionable manner at cards; and that, when any Anglo-Indian is not misconducting himself abroad, it is usually because he is in a helpless state of intoxication at home.

Now, this description, I submit, is pulling the arrow beyond legitimate lengths. English men and women are, I must again insist, the same persons at Calcutta that they were at Southampton; and that if they are inclined for a change, the

change is more likely to be for the better than the worse under an Indian sky. For the mode of life in the East is so open,—it is so impossible to throw any mystery over one's movements,—that the fear of exposure is a check when no other would avail. For this reason, if for no other, Anglo-Indians are, as a general rule, if not more careful of appearances, at any rate more prudent in the realities, than they would need to be at home. Yet "scandals" are numerous in India, you will say. This is true. But again I must beg a little discrimination. The records of the courts in India and in England, where such scandals have been investigated, will show that the majority of offenders are more or less recent arrivals, who have not had time to fall into the routine of Indian society, and who consider themselves as in no way belonging to it. If, for instance, an officer in one Royal regiment elopes with the wife of an officer in another Royal regiment, neither Royal regiment having been many months in the country, surely home-training has had something to do with the transaction. If you suddenly transplant people from Dover to Delhi, and they behave badly at the latter place, the former place must have some share in the delin-

quency. Send them from Brighton to Simla: if they misconduct themselves at Simla, is Simla only in fault? So far from there being any impunity for improprieties in India, it is obvious, from the records of courts-martial and other tribunals in that country, that proceedings which would pass without notice here, or be decorously hushed-up, are there made matters of official investigation and public scandal for months together. And although the persons in question have no real relation to Indian society,—though they be scarcely known beyond the cantonments in which they live,—unfortunate India bears the brunt of all; as if the same persons, kept at home, would have been unimpeachable in every relation of life, and innocent for ever of all connection with damages and the Divorce Court.

The same discrimination should be exercised when we hear of excesses of a bacchanalian kind, for which India has been made to bear undue responsibility. There have been days when hard drinking was the rule in the East; but those were the days when the indulgence was the rule at home. Those days are past; and in one country, as in the other, its votaries must perform their devotions in private: they certainly would not be tolerated in

anything like decent company. Here, again, it must be remembered that privacy is more difficult in the East than in the West; and I speak from experience of both when I say that many an officer has lost his commission in India for indiscretions which at home would never have attracted any notice.

In these days, when the Indian and Royal armies are amalgamated, and the officers of the two services are in name, as they have always been in reality, servants of her Majesty; when the Civil Service is no more the close borough of Indian families, but is recruited from the ranks of the public, chosen by public competition; when Englishmen of all classes and conditions are free to follow their own pursuits in a region where they are fast implanting their language and customs,—the time has surely come when the sojourners in the land, called indiscriminately Anglo-Indians, should be treated as a part of the British nation, and not as a community cut off from the mother country, and bound by new ties and new associations to another soil. In the case of a distant colony like Australia, there would be far better excuse for making a distinction; for the majority of the dwellers in the southern quarter of the globe are colonists in the

strict sense of the term. They live under their own laws and according to their own rules; their state of society is essentially their own; and those among them who return to the old country are few and far between. But the case of India is widely different. Men dwell there, for the most part, only for a limited time; and the society which they form is so mingled with that of home, that home may fairly be made responsible for some portion of its imperfections. I am surely justified, then, in considering that those who condemn Indian society —without including English society in their strictures—are drawing the long-bow.

VII.

MRS. DULCIMER'S SHIPWRECK.

A LADY'S NARRATIVE, ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

Paris—Hôtel du Louvre, *Nov.*, 1863.

If you are ever shipwrecked, my dearest Laura,—which I hope you never will be,—but if in the course of the excited career which lies before you as the wife of a Light Dragoon, you ever should be,—do contrive to get the catastrophe conducted by the Peninsular and Oriental Company. They manage it so much better than anybody else. I believe other companies drown you sometimes; and drowning is a very prosaic arrangement, besides being decidedly opposed to the manners of good society—fit only for seafaring people and second-class passengers. I have just been shipwrecked under the auspices of the P. and O., and I assure you that it is the pleasantest thing imaginable. It has its little hardships, to be sure; but so has a picnic; and the wreck was one of the most agreeable picnics you can imagine.

You know that such festivities derive their principal enjoyment from the fact that you always forget the corkscrew and the salt, and are obliged to do without them. Now, what will you say when you hear that at *our* improvised entertainment we forgot *everything;* that is to say, we did not forget, but we were deprived of everything we wanted for ever so long, and realized all the romantic pleasures of Robinson Crusoe upon his island—except that we had not to dress up in absurd goatskin, and met with only the most civilized of savages?

But of course you will want to know how it all happened; so I will tell the story without further prelude.

First, as to my reasons for coming home only two years after my marriage. It was not my fault. My husband, who, you are aware, is in the Civil Service, was sent to a distant station—a very advantageous change, as it made him a full, instead of a joint, magistrate; but the doctors all said that the journey was more than I could bear, especially in such a trying month as September; so it was settled that I should return home for a year, and become what they call a grass widow. I did not like the idea at first, on account of the separation from my husband; and besides, I can assure you that your

old friend Héloïse Simkin has become a great success in India, and, as Mrs. Dulcimer, is quite a leader, and an object of homage such as I can scarcely hope to receive in our stupid old country, where things find their level in a most unpleasant manner. Not that I flirted, you know; that would have been too bad. But I believe people called me a "frisky matron,"—a term, I hear, of the *Saturday Review's*,—and *that* I suppose I am, though it seems very hard to be called a matron at all *at my early age*.

However, there was no help for it; so the first mail in September saw me embark on board the P. and O. Company's screw-steamer *Cape Comorin*, for Suez.

We were a larger party on board than might have been expected, considering the season, which is by no means a favourite one for leaving India; for the hot weather is not over in the one country when you start, and the cold weather is just about beginning in the other country when you arrive, involving rather a violent change. We were nearly sixty passengers in all, without counting the second-class, or those strange monsters who joined us at Galle from Australia. Taking them altogether, the passengers were not a very brilliant set, but of

course there were some pleasant people among them. I was rather melancholy the first day or two, thinking of my journey out, during which I first met Mr. Dulcimer,—my letters concerning whom, by the way, somebody has had the impertinence to publish. But I brightened up by degrees, and was quite myself by the time we arrived at Madras. Here an incident occurred which caused us all great indignation. We had got up a kind of sweep-stakes,—the event being the exact time when we should weigh anchor. Each drew a particular five minutes, and whoever hit the time the nearest, of course won. The stakes were ten rupees, or one sovereign, each, and about five-and-forty persons subscribed; so the pool was worth winning. It would have been agreeable, in any case, as it was understood that the winner was to give a tiffin on shore, and bring back plenty of Madras curiosities for the ladies. But in an evil moment, a certain person—the wife of a high official in the Benighted Presidency—was asked to join. She, a perfect stranger to all of us, drew the winning five minutes, and then left us, carrying off the stakes without a hint of tiffin, or curiosities, or anything of the kind. We were very much disgusted, as you may suppose, and not inclined to be very civil to the

other Madras people who came on board—who, by the way, were all as yellow as buttercups, and envied us, as they confessed, our fresh Bengal complexions. However, we got on very well ultimately, and reached Point de Galle in tolerably good humour.

We had beautiful weather, and the day after leaving Ceylon were as joyous as could be, when the accident happened which is the occasion of my writing to you so soon.

It was a clear, calm night, when we all retired to our cabins; but afterwards, it seems, a dense fog came on, so that you could not have told when it was morning without a watch. Of course nobody was likely to turn out so soon as usual, and even the habitually early risers, who always took their *chota hazree* on deck in absurd varieties of undress, were still in their cabins at half-past six o'clock. It was about this hour when we all experienced a terrible shock. The ship had struck on a rock. There was no mistake about it. There was an awful crash, a stop, and then we turned over on one side. With the ship, my servant and myself, who alone occupied the cabin, turned over also, and to bear us company came every loose article in the apartment. I had the lower berth, so had an easy fall upon the floor;

but poor Anna Maria, who slept above, was not a little bruised, and would have been more so but that she happened to fall upon me. This was pleasanter for her than for me; but she was not half so embarrassing as the inanimate objects which swept down upon us both,—desks, dressing-cases, boots and shoes, hats, crinolines, dresses—clothes, in fact, of every kind, and all the toilette apparatus, of course, —to say nothing of the sea which poured in through the port, and drenched everything in about two minutes.

I was terribly frightened, but soon recovered myself sufficiently to laugh at the absurd picture we must have presented to anybody having the leisure to look at us. I picked myself up, and then picked up Anna Maria (our servants are always more helpless than ourselves in times of danger); and we were just extricating one another from the mass of goods and chattels with which we were encompassed, when the ship turned upon the other side, and we were all—myself, servant, goods, chattels, and everything—thrown over in the opposite direction. The same scene of confusion was now enacted again, and as the ship continued to rock from side to side, there seemed nothing for it but to get out of the cabin with all speed.

I managed to secure a dressing-gown,—how my servant costumed herself I am sure I cannot remember,—and so habited I made a dash into the saloon. Here a scene of indescribable confusion was being enacted. All round the large dining-tables people were running, apparently without object. There were no cries heard, but the face of everybody bore the impress of blank despair. I speak more especially of the ladies. The gentlemen, for the most part, were trying to assure their female friends that there was nothing the matter; that ships were often stopped as ours was; and that the rocking to and fro, without being able to move an inch, was the sign of a prosperous voyage rather than otherwise. But the countenances of some of the lords of the creation belied their words, and a few showed unmistakable signs of funk. Only one of the gentlemen passengers seemed to derive any pleasure from the scene. This was a middle-aged person, who had come from Australia. He had been snubbed somehow by the ladies, with scarcely any of whom he had made acquaintance. The only conversation I had had with him was not of a very amicable character. He was jealous, I fancy, at the attention paid me by the other passengers,—as if *I* had not always been used to attention,—and the day

before the accident he had come up to me and said, without introduction, and *à propos* of nothing as regarded the subject, "I tell you what it is, Mrs. Dulcimer, I don't think so much of you as your friends on board; in fact"—and he said this with an air of tremendous severity—"*I think you are more engaging than pretty.*" With which speech he left me, evidently expecting that I should be abased to the earth. I believe the other ladies had neglected him also, for he now made an indiscriminate attack upon us all.

"We are all lost," said he,—"irretrievably lost." And he seemed to take a kind of pleasure in making the announcement, as if it was no business of his.

The saloon was filled with the passengers, ladies especially, who were bent upon saving whatever valuables they had at hand. The tables were soon strewn with stray things that they were trying to dispose of about their persons—a rather difficult process, by the way, as most of the ladies were in their *toilettes de nuit.* One of them I noticed—and I dare say others did the same—went on deck in that condition, and began talking to one of the ship's officers about the chances of escape as composedly as if she had been in full dress in a drawing-room. The ship's officers, who were making arrangements

for the general good, would not, of course, be disturbed by particular appeals. It was the purser, I think, who gave his arm to the lady in question, and conducted her, with great gravity, back to her cabin. If I had been on the point of death—as, indeed, I believed at the time I was—I could not have refrained from laughing at the curious appearance of the pair. The purser had on something like his usual complement of clothing; but the lady—well, it was the most ridiculous thing you ever beheld. During all this time the other passengers had managed to array themselves more or less; but the less, I am afraid, was predominant over the more. Some had thrown wrappers over their night-clothes—by far the safest plan. Others had attempted to dress themselves regularly, and, being afraid to complete their toilettes, appeared in simple crinolines. Some had put on boots without stockings, others stockings without boots. A few appeared with one boot and one stocking; and one—her appearance was more absurd than any—had attired herself in very limited under garments, and a corset, which, half-laced as it was, may be more easily imagined than described. Out of their cabins they came: some bent upon simply saving their lives; others determined that, come what might, they would rescue some propor-

tion of the things that made life endurable. A few ladies had got their jewel-cases out into the saloon, and were making a selection of the articles they considered most valuable. One, I noticed, was very particular about a bracelet with hair in it, which she fastened upon her arm as carefully as if she was decorating herself for some festive occasion. Another evinced similar solicitude about a little locket, which she had some difficulty in finding among secret drawers. A third seemed to care for nothing but her marriage-certificate, which she carefully placed in a purse, and hung about her neck. She seemed to think that if she *was* to be drowned, it was better to go out of the world with proper credentials. The more mercenary were solicitous merely about money.

"What shall I do with these notes?" said one. "Do, dear captain" (this was to the captain of the ship), "take care of them for me." "What a dreadful nuisance!" said another; "I forgot to change all these rupees in Calcutta, and the bag will sink me if I hang it round my neck." "Here is a letter of credit upon Coutts's," said a third, who seemed to require a letter of credit upon an outfitter more than anything else; "*who will cash it for me?* I will give any percentage." The latter offer was made in a voice of agony. My poor friend

seemed to think that the price of securities was going up in the market, when, in point of fact, it could not well be more down; not, however, that money itself was in a much better position, for very few seemed to care about that. One of those who did, received a characteristic rebuke from our Australian friend. "What do you mean by taking your money?" said he; "you will never want it." And then he returned to the old chorus, which seemed to give him so much satisfaction, "We are all lost—irretrievably lost!"

It was curious to see, by the way, how the neglected people were made use of at the crisis. There was one man who seemed to know nobody, and to whom nobody, I believe, had spoken. He was appealed to now as a confidential friend, and a lady gave him her child to carry—a charge which he considered so onerous that, as we afterwards found, he never attempted to save anything of his own, but lost all he possessed with a devotion worthy of a more profitable cause.

In the meantime the ship went rocking to and fro with more violence than ever, and as it seemed that no good came of remaining in the saloon, nearly everybody rushed upon deck—costumes to the contrary notwithstanding, as I heard remarked

by a flippant young attorney, who was too professional to believe in danger without conclusive evidence. And certainly our condition was such as well might provoke laughter. I have told you of the arrangements as to skirts, &c. The *coiffures* were, if possible, more ridiculous, and in respect of these, as indeed of all matters relating to the toilette, you might see personal character cropping out. Some ladies, who had always appeared to have abundant hair, now presented themselves with half-bald heads; and dreadful objects they looked, it must be confessed; while others, whom we had never given credit for having much hair of their own, displayed themselves as nicely *coiffé* as ever—a transparent arrangement which deceived nobody. One lady, who had always been suspected of doing something to her complexion, and in particular of rouging, showed exactly the same as usual, and I have every reason to believe that she had spent twenty minutes upon her face even at this terrible crisis. It is certain that she had bestowed very little time upon any other department of adornment; for her wardrobe was so limited when she came upon deck, that a contribution was at once levied in her favour upon another passenger, who appeared in most unbecoming style as regarded her

head, but with no less than three robes, one over the other. She surely must have dressed for the shipwreck before leaving Galle!

Two or three of the ladies—I noticed only two or three—were completely costumed. They might have made a morning call in the attire which they wore on this short notice; and a few of the gentlemen were in equally good order. I suppose habit does a great deal for people in such cases.

Well, the rocking went on, and everything in the saloon was in the greatest state of confusion—all the cabin-doors open, everybody rushing about in the diversified attire I have described, trying to save whatever property they could collect, with a view to ultimately saving themselves. But this proceeding was brought to a sudden close by an order from the captain for us all to go on deck. Everybody, of course, considered this to mean that we were going to pieces at once; so the things that had been collected were thrown down anywhere, and every lady went up, supported by the first gentleman who came to hand—or perhaps I might more properly say, to arm. What a sight the deck presented, compared with its usual appearance at the same hour! Instead of the freshly-washed *parquet*, everything clean and neat and in its place,

and passengers, nicely dressed, having their promenade before breakfast, there was nothing but uncleanliness and confusion; haggard, half-clothed wretches rushing about in despair, and the ship's company all talking at once, as they set about their duty. What duty they were engaged in was soon apparent—they were lowering the boats.

Directly this was seen, there was a general rush at the unfortunate captain to be saved—this at least on the part of the ladies. Some merely asked for themselves: "Oh, do, dear captain, take me into a boat; oh, do take care of me!" Others were thoughtful for their husbands or children: "Oh, do, dear captain, think of my little boy; do not let him be left behind!" or, "Oh, make my Henry go in the first boat; if you don't, I know he will be waiting, and then there will be no room for him. You may leave *me* if you like!" And so forth. The poor captain was at his wits' end between them all. "My good ladies," said he, "we will get you all off if you will only have a little patience, and be a little quiet. The boats shall take you in parties —ladies first, gentlemen afterwards. The shore, you see, is not far off."

The land was close upon us—indeed, not more than three hundred yards distant. Oh! and it

looked so green and pleasant, covered as it was with cocoa-nut trees; and we thought how happy the black people must be whom we saw crowding down to look at us. Nothing, surely, could be more delightful than to be at a place that there was no occasion to escape from!

The lowering of the boats was a work of great difficulty, in consequence of the rocking of the ship, which, indeed, was so strong as to sweep the passengers, unless they clung to something very tightly, all to one side at every movement. Fortunately, I was very well provided for in my cavalier, Captain Skylark, who told me from the first that nothing worse would happen to us than the possible loss of our property; so I made myself quite comfortable, and waited for things to develop.

The boats were all right at last, and the next work was to get into them. There was awful crowding for the first, in which I did not take part; for, as Captain Skylark said, the second would do just as well, and there would not be the same rush, nor consequent chance of being swamped. It was quite impossible that the ladies could descend the ladder alone; so the captain simplified matters by carrying them down in his arms, one after another. One boat full, another was brought alongside, and so on;

and the ladies once disposed of, the gentlemen were accommodated, the whole, in time, getting safe off. The captain himself was the last to leave the ship. The business was managed very well—the only awkwardness being occasioned by two or three ladies having somebody else's babies instead of their own, and one lady, who had got the right baby, seeing its bottle, which she had given to a gentleman to hold, go into another boat. Notwithstanding the miserable state we were all in, we could not help laughing at hearing such cries as, "This is the wrong child they have given me; I don't want it, and won't have it!" Or, "Where's Captain Tulwar and the baby's bottle?"

A miserable state we were in, to be sure. The surf was too heavy for oars, so the boats had to be pulled on shore by means of ropes—though how they got the other ends of the ropes on shore first, I cannot say. We had to stoop down in the boats in a most uncomfortable position, in order to let these ropes pass over our heads; and as the sea did *not* pass over our heads at the same time, but drenched us very considerably, you may guess what a very pleasant journey we had.

It soon came to an end, however. I had shut my eyes, and squeezed myself into as small a compass

as possible, and was aroused only by the boat touching ground. But we were by no means in yet. There was another hundred yards of shallow sea to be traversed. I was just wondering if we were expected to wade through it, when a steward said to me, "Don't be particular, ma'am; jump on my back." So as it was of no use being particular, I wasn't, and was carried on shore very comfortably, the other ladies making the journey in the same way.

It was a miracle that we all reached land in safety; for one of the ropes broke, and the boat was hurled back against the ship. It was not our boat; but *en revanche* we were as nearly swamped as could be. However, there we all were at last, safe on land. All of us? Yes; nobody was missing. It was a curious sensation the time occupied in ascertaining the fact. The captain counted us over in regular order, but of course we could not be satisfied with that. "Where is Emily?" "I hope dear Mrs. Wavelet is with us?" "Oh, yes, dear, here." "I've not seen Miss Topaz yet; I hope she's safe." "Oh, yes, ma'am; she's over there sitting on the sand, and wringing the water out of her hair." "Oh, I'm so glad to see you again, Captain Tulwar; I was afraid you were lost, and had taken my baby's

bottle with you." Poor Captain Tulwar, by the way, was holding the bottle at arm's length, as if it was an antique lamp, not knowing what to do with it. "This is your baby, ma'am; and I'll thank you to give me mine." "I have not the smallest desire to keep it, I can assure you; other people's babies are not such desirable possessions." "Yes, this is mine; but it had a coral in its hand." "Well, ma'am, I have not taken the coral, if you mean that." "I have not seen that fat, bald-headed old gentleman we took on board at Madras. I gave Julia to him to take care of." "Oh, yes, ma'am, he's here, and here's Julia, and you can take her back; she doesn't seem to like me much; I suppose it's because I'm fat and bald." "Oh, I meant nothing, sir. Julia, why do you not thank the gentleman?"

Such were the exclamations heard on all sides. Of course the ladies had the greatest share of the talk. The gentlemen generally behaved with great composure; though one or two of them, I was sorry to see, had kept up their courage before leaving the ship by something which greatly resembled brandy in its effects. I forgot to mention my Australian friend all this time. I told you how bitter he was in his remarks. It seems that he had spent his

entire life in accumulating an immense fortune, and felt it rather hard that it should be lost, and himself with it, just as he was bringing it home to spend. Up to the last moment of getting into the boats, he had been harping upon the old strain, "We are all lost—irretrievably lost;" and now, when we were safely landed, he came up to me, and said, "Well, Mrs. Dulcimer, we have a pleasant prospect before us; we shall be starved here, it seems; for it's very unlikely that we shall ever be taken off, and there's nothing to eat on the island. I'm afraid your little doll's face and engaging manners won't do much for us here." Wasn't it bearish of him? But I believe the fact was that the poor man was desperately in love with me, and that I added considerably to the bitterness with which he met his ill fortune.

However, there was no danger of starving for the present. There were plenty of cocoa-nuts, at any rate; and these the natives came and offered us with every appearance of sympathy. I think I never tasted anything so delicious in my life as a draught of the milk. There was a little rice, too, it seems, but we did not trouble ourselves about that at the time. Some of the gentlemen had flasks of brandy; and this, with water, was not unacceptable,

even to the ladies; for the air was heavy with mist, and a drizzling rain kept you in a thorough state of damp. Those who had blankets, rolled themselves in them to get warm, or gave them to the children, who needed them even more. The latter added to our miseries by crying for biscuits and everything else that was not to be had. In this state we all lay or sat upon the sand, waiting for what might come next.

What came next was of a very satisfactory nature. Boats from the ship, bringing provisions, burst upon our delighted eyes; and, in addition, we saw sheep and other live-stock—poor devoted creatures! —thrown overboard, and allowed to swim on shore. Another anxious couple of hours passed away; and then we were directed by the captain to walk about a quarter of a mile inland, where two small huts were assigned for our accommodation. This was a very welcome relief; for the sun was becoming strong as the mist cleared away, and the rain, too, continued to drizzle. But the huts were not sufficient to hold half of us; so a large tent was pitched for the remainder. In the meantime a fire had been kindled in the open air, and round it we all crowded, despite the rain, to dry our dresses, or get some comfort, at any rate.

We were nearly all ladies here, most of the gentlemen having been left on the beach, endeavouring to save the luggage from the ship. We were awfully hungry by the middle of the day, but had to content ourselves with some damp biscuits and water. It was a weary time that we passed in the huts and the tent,—relieved, of course, a little, by conversation, —until five o'clock came, and with it the welcome announcement that we were to have dinner. The announcement came in the form of an odour, which explained itself; and we all agreed that the *Jockey Club* and *Alexandra Bouquet* were nothing to it. And what do you think it was? Nothing but Irish stew,—and oh, *so* fat! We could not have touched it at any other time; and we had no bread or vegetables to relieve it. Moreover, we had neither plates nor knives and forks, but ate off large leaves with our fingers. But it was a charming meal; and we all declared that no *diner à la Russe* was ever half so good. The gentlemen, too, had joined us by this time, and contributed to keep up our spirits; so that we could even make fun of our situation, which we certainly could not have done in the morning. The gentlemen had, of course, managed to save some cheroots, which were damp but delightful,—at least, so they said. These they smoked after

dinner; and it is a curious fact, that several ladies who never could endure the odour before, forgot to be ill through it now.

This was all very well until it became time to retire to rest, and then our troubles began anew. The invalids were put into the huts, and the rest of us slept in the tent, or tried to sleep. Of course we had no beds,—nothing but blankets and rugs,—and no pillows, except such as we could improvise. Undressing altogether, therefore, was out of the question; and as for partial undressing, scarcely any of us had anything to spare; so we nearly all lay down as we were. And a pleasant time we had of it, truly! The heat was terrific, and the musquitos everywhere—there must have been thousands of them in the tent, for the noise they made was as loud as bagpipes. So repose was out of the question, except by fits and starts; and when you got it, you were always sure to be roused by somebody crying out at the bites, and slapping at their faces and necks in order to crush the authors of their misery. There was one stout lady who suffered more than any of us: she had not had a wink of sleep for hours, but lay awake, moaning and crying, and slapping at the horrid little insects, who seemed to have taken a particular affection for

her. At last she was quiet, and dropped into a slumber; but it did not endure long.

"Are you awake, dear?" said a sympathetic voice —that of a particular friend, who sincerely pitied her condition.

"Yes, I am *now!*" was the answer, made with undisguised fury. "But I was just off in a beautiful sleep, which you have quite put an end to!"

Apologies were useless; the mischief was done; sleep had flown from the eyelids of the large lady, and returned no more. How she hated her particular friend! For myself, I confess that I could not forbear laughing.

I slept scarcely at all until morning, making some little use of my time by fanning the children, who suffered awfully. But I dropped off just before daylight, and then I had nightmare. When I awoke, I found myself with my head half-buried in the sand, under a chair.

Where the gentlemen slept I know not, but I suppose in the open air. I saw the doctor in the middle of the night, when he prescribed some claret-and-water. Some claret had fortunately been saved from the wreck.

Next morning, the ladies—that is to say, all who wished, or were strong enough—went to bathe in

the sea. Two gentlemen kept guard on the beach, to keep off intruders. Of course I was among the bathers; and a beautiful swim I had. Then back to breakfast—Irish stew again; very monotonous, but very nice. After breakfast we learnt, to our delight, that we were to go to a Rajah's palace, instead of our huts and tents. The palace was about a mile off. In the meantime we learnt, still more to our delight, that the greater portion of the passengers' baggage had been recovered from the ship, and was on the shore. This, however, was to be sent after us; so we did not wait for it. At the palace, whither we went like birds, there were two large rooms provided for us, in which we could place mattresses for sleeping. For a dining-room, a hut was soon rigged up; and there we were, very comfortable indeed. On the walls of the latter we found written,—a touching piece of sentiment on the part of the stewards,—

"HAVE PITY ON US POOR SHIPWRECKED PASSENGERS."

The work of organization was now commenced. A regular commissariat was established, and every arrangement was made for a more or less protracted stay. We were to have two meals a day, the inevitable mutton being relieved by raisins, flour, &c. For the exigencies of tea, there was a solitary cow; but we soon found it was quite unavailable for that

refreshment. It was regularly besieged by anxious mothers for their children, so that everybody who was not an anxious mother soon gave it up in despair. There was great rejoicing among the gentlemen—and among the ladies, too, perhaps—when it was found that there was a tolerably good stock of beer; and it was now arranged that everybody, ladies as well as gentlemen, should be allowed one bottle each every day. The ladies, I need scarcely say, gave up a considerable portion of *their* share to their more thirsty friends.

We now formed ourselves into messes—that is to say, the different "parties" into which we had fallen allied themselves together, and joined issue in common wants. Some parties were better provided than others, and you cannot think to what jealousies their various resources gave rise. We all dined together, of course, in the common tent; and whatever anybody had in particular went no farther than the immediate circle to which we belonged. It was not much that there was to covet in any case, but of the little a great deal was made. Among our party I know of nothing except a bottle of chutnee which was not common to all; but this bottle of chutnee brought down upon us an amount of envy which you would scarcely believe. "Giving them-

selves airs!" "Think they can carry all before them!" "Disgusting upstarts!" Phrases like these we heard freely current in reference to our poor little indulgence. I never knew a simple bottle of chutnee excite so much bad feeling in all my life.

I now write without reference to any particular day, but as regards all the days we passed on the island. We became a regular community, bound together by certain general laws, but broken up awfully by different interests, which assumed quite a political importance. I am sure that if we had brought out a newspaper—which we certainly should have done had we remained much longer on the island—abundant topics for controversy would have presented themselves, and that we should all have quarrelled dreadfully. Happily, no machinery of the kind was available, and whatever we had to say against one another evaporated in simple talk. On the whole, nothing could be more harmonious than our way of life. Our bath in the morning, which was delicious; our breakfast, with Irish stew and claret-and-water, which was endurable, at any rate; our dinner, which was a repetition of our breakfast, and just as welcome; and our *séances* after that, when we all sat down on the beach, and sang songs till bedtime;—everything was charming,

and after a day or two we enjoyed ourselves immensely. So luxurious, indeed, did we get, that we soon became dissatisfied with the state of our costume, and began to look after our personal appearance. We were all dressed, as I have said, in a very *accidenté* way; but after a couple of days, the greater part of our personal luggage being recovered, it was sent on to us, and great was the excitement of opening it, and seeing how far it was available. Of course a great many of our things were spoiled; but still we managed to get together sufficient to make a tolerably good appearance, and those who had not been so fortunate as others were content to receive contributions. For one lady, who had lost a very important box, we made a collection —of what, do you think? Of steel hoops from our crinolines, with which she managed to make a garment for herself, and to appear quite presentable. Mine, I must confess, had come greatly to grief, and the second day we were on the island stood much in need of repair. I undertook the task of mending it myself, and had it strung up in one of the invalids' huts. This was just before we moved to the Rajah's palace. I was standing actually *in* the garment—that is to say, my head and shoulders in it—putting some of the hoops in order, when I received a

sudden visit from Captain Skylark. You can imagine my confusion; but he promised not to tell, and I believe the first fun made of my ridiculous position is made by myself. All our clothing which admitted of being washed was somehow very scarce, so we had to make regular arrangements for putting it in order. There were several tanks in the neighbourhood, some of which were used for our drinking water, while others were appropriated for washing purposes, and assigned respectively to our several parties. I was greatly annoyed one day at finding that one of our drinking-tanks had been seized by a second-class passenger, whom I found actually employed in washing within it his five ugly little children, and the family linen into the bargain. Of course I gave information of his aggression, and he was not allowed to repeat it. But even at the legitimate places allowed for such purposes, there were many awkward rencontres. At our tank, for instance, I met a lady one day, a thorough old Indian, the wife of a *qui hai* major, who was engaged in washing some of the family garments. She had never liked me, and now gave me a bit of her mind, frankly telling me that she always thought I was not a lady, because I used to sing upon deck after tea; and she added, "I should like to shake you, you

creature, if I dared!" This I did not mind, and I think my not minding it made her the more enraged.

We became quite particular about our toilettes, as I have said, and got up our collars and sleeves beautifully; that is to say, we washed them punctually in the tanks, and for want of ironing had recourse to a very ingenious device. We all sat on benches placed round the dinner-table, which benches were covered with canvas, or something of the kind. Under the covering we placed our sleeves and other things that required pressing. By the time dinner was over, they were always done delightfully; and when there was a special requirement, we placed them in our own neighbourhood, and gave our friends a hint of the service they were to render—that is to say, told them to sit quietly, that the things might not be crumpled. By this means we managed to maintain our dignity to the last; and I doubt whether shipwrecked passengers, on the whole, ever presented a more respectable appearance. My remark, however, applies only to those who took things good-humouredly. There were a few ladies among us who never would consent to forget what they considered their individual importance. I was particularly amused with the

wife of a vet—veterinary surgeon, you know—who always talked of the magnificent wardrobe she had lost, of which, we had seen no signs while it was supposed to be in her possession. She was awfully hard up for clothes, and, among other things, for stockings. I offered to give her some. They were of humble whitey-brown cotton. She hurled the suggestion back upon me with disdain. "Her Thomas," she said, "would never let her wear anything else but silk." So for want of silk she positively went without. Anywhere but on the island, where we were all in such straits, nobody would have dreamt of considering her a lady (although, by the way, she did *not* sing upon deck); but this was her great opportunity for distinction, and it was too important to be missed. Several other persons, I observed, improved the occasion by talking of imaginary wardrobes; and some, I am sorry to say, *found* things belonging to other passengers, which they maintained to be their own, alleging the special occasions on which they had passed into their possession, wedding-days being particular favourites, as I noticed in nearly every case. Not only shawls, and such adaptable articles, were appropriated, but jewellery to a considerable extent; the latter more particularly by the

stewardesses, who had remained in the cabins until the last moment, and appeared to have searched the ring-stands and the tumblers, into which we threw stray articles of daily use, with great punctuality.

Fortunately, we got back the greater part of our heavy luggage, and a great many loose things were thrown on shore. The baggage was opened on the beach, that the contents might dry, and a curious scene was there presented. Of the stray articles we were glad to pick up anything we could find. "Here is a stocking, dear; do you want one?" "Oh, I have found a shoe; it will just fit Clara." "A bit of sponge and a boot-lace, I declare; I will take them to Mrs. Waif, and if she is not wanting anything of the kind, Mrs. Stray will be glad to get them." "Whose hat is this? I wish it would fit me: I have had nothing but a wet towel round my head since we landed." "Don't touch all these photographic portraits; they are only put there to dry." "Oh, I wish that petticoat was mine!" Such was the nature of the remarks elicited by the great exhibition on the beach. I need scarcely say, that among all the good-humoured people there was a community of goods, and that nobody

wanted for anything that anybody had, except persons like the vet's wife, who took advantage of the time to give themselves absurd airs. For myself, I was in great distress for two days for want of a hat. I had three when I left Calcutta, but two had blown overboard. Fortunately, I found the one I had in wear—where do you think?—up a tree! How it came there, I know not, but I suppose the wind took care of it for me. It was a great day for me when I found the hat; and I confess I never felt so happy as on the first occasion when I was able to have my hair crimped, and come in to dinner in a black silk dress which I got from my trunks. I had been a little touched by the sun, I fear; but the heat becomes me, and when I feel my face burning, I know I look awfully pretty, and don't care who sees me. This, however, was after we got off the island. While there, I accommodated myself to circumstances, making my costume as becoming as possible *without* a crinoline, after the first few days, by means of a black silk jacket over a coloured skirt.

I should have mentioned that immediately after our landing on the island, one of the ship's boats was despatched to Bombay, in charge of

an officer, in order to bring us help. It was more than doubtful if the boat would live: if it had not, we must have despatched another, in hopes of its meeting a better fate. We heard nothing for ten days of the mission, and began to be very anxious. Every cloud was taken for a steamer, and when the steamer at last came, it was taken for a cloud.

The steamer did come at last, on the eleventh day; and you should have heard the hurrahs with which it was received! We were all mad with delight! Everybody went about shaking everybody else by the hand. Quarrels were all forgotten in the general glee. We all swore eternal friendship, and joined in choruses of congratulation. The dullest people, who had always declared that they were not musical, now "favoured the company with a song," out of sheer exultation, without being asked at all. This was while the steamer was in the distance. When it actually arrived, the general ecstasy approached a pitch which would be usually considered indicative of lunacy. We were all such friends that our greatest fear was lest we should ever be parted. My old Australian acquaintance, who had said that I was more engaging than pretty, and that we

were all lost, irretrievably lost, came up and shook me warmly by both hands, saying that he had always loved me like a daughter, and that I was one of the last persons upon earth whom he would wish to offend. The vet's wife, forgetting all the fabulous splendour which had been sunk in her imaginary boxes, came to me with tears in her eyes, and said she would take the stockings after all. Even the old female major relented, and, so far from "shaking" me, kissed me affectionately, and said I was a dear good thing, and had behaved very well during a severe trial. Altogether, the latter end of our adventure was so pleasant, that when we had to go on board the steamer, we actually regretted leaving the island, to be once more scattered over the world; and I saw many of my fellow-passengers shed tears when we were in the boat, looking back to the scene where we had undergone so many hardships in common. However, nobody preferred being left behind; and once safe afloat, we were all glad of the many comforts with which we renewed our acquaintance. The ship had been sent from Bombay especially to take us to Suez, and there we caught the regular Overland Mail. We were not very welcome to

the passengers, as we interfered a little with the regular arrangements, and were, moreover, objects of interest, naturally engrossing the principal attention. I do believe that many of our new friends envied the misfortunes which attracted towards us so much regard. All we could do for them was to put them out of their misery as soon as possible. I speak of myself and my own "party," who all came *viâ* Marseilles, and made the best of our way to dear Paris, where we are now located. We are all here together in the hotel, and should be as happy as the day was long, if it were three times as long as it is. We rush about in groups, seeing great sights that we don't care about, and buying everything that we don't want, with the greatest enjoyment possible. The sensation of having a real house to live in, was in itself a perfect pleasure for the first few days. Then we bethought ourselves of our toilettes. None of our sea-things would do now. We looked into third-rate shops. "Oh, what a beautiful mantle!" was the prelude to going in and buying it, of course. Then we always found afterwards that we had got the wrong thing, and had to go somewhere else for the right. No British reticence distinguished us

upon these occasions. We made everybody our confidants. At the hotel our adventures were, of course, notorious. At the shops we always said, "Ah, madame!"— or "monsieur," as the case might be —"nous avons fait naufrage; mais abbe sub utcha hai." We mixed up Hindustanee and French with more than the usual recklessness of Overland travellers. The people thought us rather mad, no doubt, but were full of sympathy, and indeed are so still; for we have by no means come to an end of our enthusiasm, and do not intend until after Christmas. It is all very well to talk about one's home and one's family, but there is a bond between shipwrecked passengers which is not easily broken. Just now we are all like sailors on shore; and if you can imagine any enjoyment greater than that, I shall be obliged by your pointing it out. Of course I shall be delighted to meet my old friends again, and my Laura in particular; but in the meantime you must excuse me for being a little infatuated with my present mode of life. Write soon. Ever your fondly attached HÉLOÏSE.

VIII.

A TRAVELLER'S TALE—TOLD IN A DÂK BUNGALOW.

THE following incidents were communicated to me by a chance traveller, while we were both waiting for horses on the Grand Trunk Road; and I make him responsible, of course, for their authenticity :—

The parade was over, and the men dismissed. The morning sun was just beginning to get strong, as the Colonel and I rode from the ground together. It was our wont to return home in company, partly because I was his adjutant, and there were always regimental matters to talk over on the way; and partly because I was his intimate friend, and usually took some early tea at his bungalow before proceeding to my own, which adjoined.

Our regiment was quartered at Benares, at that time a very favourite station in the north-west

provinces of India. It may be a favourite station still, but I will not answer for the fact; for nearly all things have changed in India since the time of which I speak, and it would be strange indeed if the attractions of Benares remained as they were.

Those were days when great men commanded black armies, and black armies did great things; days when enthusiastic veterans assured you that Jack Sepoy would go anywhere and do anything if he was only properly led; days when mutinies had been thought of, and to some extent felt, but were never talked of above a whisper, and when nobody, most certainly, dreamed of *one* mutiny like that we saw in '57. We had had our wars in India, and were destined to have others; but at the time in question we were enjoying an interval of peace, and fighting our battles over again in the pleasantest possible way—across dinner-tables and during constitutional rides. Indian society was at that time a very pleasant *camaraderie*, whatever may be said against it in Europe. Nearly all of its members were servants—civil or military—of our honourable masters the East India Company; and we were quite content to have no rank on the other side of the Cape so long as we had the

Peninsula so much to ourselves, and enjoyed all the privileges and emoluments of the finest service in the world. The fact is, we rather looked down upon the Horse Guards, and the unfortunate civilians in England, who have to work so hard for their money, and considered the "Company's salt" the finest seasoning that could be given to any active career. The Overland Route as yet had no existence, though, as events proved, it was very soon to be a fact; and the long sea-voyage was a great check upon the imagination of the authorities at home, who principally confined their attentions to sending troops to help to fight *our* battles. These troops we looked upon as very useful mercenaries, and we patronized them accordingly; indeed, when they had become well seasoned, and their European edges were tolerably rubbed off, we very handsomely considered them almost on an equality with ourselves.

Well, the Colonel and I rode towards his bungalow. There was a silence for some minutes, which I did not break, as I generally gave him an opportunity of alluding to possible regimental subjects before volunteering general conversation.

But on this morning he was evidently occupied with some private reflections; for service matters

were not likely to cause him the anxiety that his countenance betrayed.

At last his thoughts found tongue, and he said abruptly—

"I have news for you, Aylmar,—news that you do not expect."

I might have been sure, had I thought twice, or indeed thought at all, that no matters relating to myself were likely to have made him gloomy or mysterious; but I must confess that my first impression on hearing of "news" had reference to a step which, by the way, I *did* expect in the regiment, and to a possible political appointment which I was using his interest to obtain. I was all attention in a moment, and reined in my horse so close to the Colonel's that the two steeds were in the immediate interchange of confidences which threatened to come to kicks.

"No, my boy," said the Colonel, smiling, and guessing my disinterested idea; "no, I have heard nothing as yet of the political agency; what I have to tell you concerns myself—ourselves."

I dare say you will not believe it, but I solemnly declare that I was more interested than before, and asked, with unfeigned earnestness, to hear more.

"Well," continued the Colonel, "my news is this:—The express, bringing the English letters, arrived this morning, just as I was mounting my horse, and there is *no* letter from Meredith. This makes a whole year that he has missed writing, and I have made up my mind to return to England by the next ship."

It was startling news, indeed, to me, and I scarcely knew how to receive it. I could only say, "And Miss Merton?"

"It is on her account, of course, that we go," interrupted the Colonel. "I consider that Meredith's conduct is not only injurious to Florence, but insulting to me—to the family; and I am determined, on my arrival in England, to call him to account. He shall find that I will not be put off with any but the most satisfactory explanation. Not only my own honour in the matter, but the state of my daughter's health, induces me to take this step. Florence will never, I am convinced, give up the man without the strongest proof against him; and the state of uncertainty in which we are kept threatens to produce upon her the unhappiest effects."

I made but little remark upon what he told me, and we both pursued our reflections until we

arrived at the house, where Miss Merton came forth upon the verandah to meet us.

I was prepared to see her looking pale and anxious. She had been so when I had seen her a week before. But I was not prepared for the change which had been wrought in her even in that short interval. The white dress of Dacca muslin which she wore was not more white than her skin, which, always delicately fair, had usually sufficient colour in it to indicate health. And yet her paleness did not seem the result of indisposition; on the contrary, it appeared perfectly natural, and even appropriate to her beauty. Of this the main features were a somewhat tall and singularly graceful figure; a face of marvellous delicacy and sweetness, lit up by great eyes compounded of meaning and mystery; and fair hair simply fastened up, but falling in masses wherever it could. She looked so strange and wild that one might have fancied her possessed, and in the fascination which she cast around her there appeared something of the nature of a spell. These characteristics were remarkable at all times, but at the present were heightened by causes which, already alluded to by the Colonel, require only a few words of explanation from me.

Florence Merton had been betrothed for the last three years to an officer in the medical service, whose first acquaintance with the family dated some years farther back, when he joined the regiment, of which Colonel Merton was then major, in the quality of assistant-surgeon. The excitement and exposure of the last campaign had so affected his health as to necessitate a journey home. It was nearly two years since he had sailed, and once only had a letter been received from him. This was posted immediately on his landing at Gravesend, and assured his betrothed that he was already greatly invigorated by the voyage, and that, if he continued to progress at the same rate, he should get the remainder of his leave cancelled, and return to India in a very few months. This was the last that had been heard of Arthur Meredith. Florence had written several letters to him, without waiting for a reply, as you may suppose; for in those days, when the Overland Route was among the things that were not, and the voyage round the Cape was by no means so speedy as now, the despatch of a letter and the receipt of its answer involved the greater portion of a year. But after her several missives had been despatched without the receipt of an acknowledgment even of the first, her pride forbade her to write more;

and she had now been for a year the victim of that terrible heart-sickness which comes from hope deferred.

Florence had not been without the consolation of a companion of her own sex during this time of trial. Her mother lived, and was all to her that a mother should be—who attends strictly to her duties, and has no idea beyond. She had educated her daughter herself, and brought her up with the greatest care. The duties she had undertaken were the more onerous, as Florence, born in India, had not been sent home, as are the majority of European children; her parents never having persuaded themselves to part with their only child, and the Colonel's duties, rendered more than ever imperative during war, not having permitted him to make the voyage himself. But Mrs. Merton, though a person of excellent breeding, and more accomplished, perhaps, than most ladies of her day, was rather too conventional, and I am afraid I must say narrow-minded, to understand her daughter, or to allow her daughter to understand her. She was very fond of Florence, but objected strongly to her strange, mysterious ways, which I am inclined to think she considered not quite respectable; and I have heard her say that she would feel more sympathy with

her daughter's depression of spirits if they had not quite so theatrical an appearance.

The consequence was, that Florence, without having a tincture of false sentiment or affectation of any kind in her composition, was not so confidential with her mother as she would have been with a less material kind of person; and so she grew more strange and mysterious, perhaps, than she would otherwise have been. She had certainly ways of her own which were singularly unlike those of other people. Her temper, as a general rule, was as sweet as her manners were gentle. But there were times when she would betray irritation evidently beyond her control, and her strong though brief bursts of passion were not pleasant to see. I can answer, at any rate, for one of them, at which time the expression of her face—of her eyes especially—irresistibly reminded me of that of a *cat*. In her natural state of repose there was nothing whatever to recall of that animal. During the fit of indignation which it was my misfortune to witness, she was very bitter against Meredith; declared that she hated him from the bottom of her heart, and that no earthly power should induce her to become his wife. Whenever she "so far forgot herself"—to use Mrs. Merton's mode of alluding to her failing—I was told

that her wrath was always directed against her absent lover; and this was the more remarkable, as in her usual state of repose she always declared she would not believe in his perfidy, and was certain that his silence would be eventually explained. With the exception of the peculiarities I have noticed, there was nothing to distinguish her demeanour from that of any young lady of the most perfect refinement; but her amiability of disposition was expressed in all her actions. Even the mysterious fascination which I have mentioned as belonging to her did not detract from this impression. If a fairy had been at work upon her, it was a good fairy, at any rate.

I said that I had noticed all her peculiarities. There is one, however, that I have omitted, and it may seem too trifling to notice at all. I had met her upon dozens of occasions when full-dress had been the rule, and had never once seen her in a dress which displayed the neck below the throat. In one manner or another she had always been rigorously covered up, and there was no instance of her having been seen in a different style of toilette. Curiously enough, though everybody else remarked upon the fact, neither the Colonel nor Mrs. Merton ever alluded to it. You may suppose, therefore,

that, intimate as I was with the family, I never ventured to introduce the subject myself.

On the morning to which I refer, I stayed to breakfast, at the pressing solicitation of the ladies, as well as of the Colonel, all being of opinion that I might do them some service in arranging their plans. These, however, were very simple. Their departure involved no difficulties, as the Colonel's furlough had been due for some years. Little more remained, therefore, than to obtain the formal permission from authority, place the household furniture, &c., in the hands of an agent for sale, and secure cabins in a passenger-ship that was to sail in a few months' time from Calcutta.

Colonel Merton did not avow to his daughter the reason which induced him to seek this sudden change; but the probability of meeting with Meredith was freely discussed, and Florence did not conceal her delight at the idea. It was only on the Colonel's return from parade that she had learned his intentions, and already it had a perceptible effect upon her spirits, evinced in her manner, and even her appearance. By the time breakfast was over, indeed, she had lost the extreme paleness which had startled me on my entrance, and looked more like herself than she had looked for months

before. Mrs. Merton, on her daughter leaving the room, remarked upon the change, and the hopes which she ventured to found upon it.

And now another question arose—Why should not I, who had so long lived in such intimate alliance with my good friends, take this opportunity of making a voyage to England myself? My health for some time past had been such as would have amply justified a sick-certificate, and the only reason why I had not applied for one before, was my unwillingness to leave my post, even temporarily, while Colonel Merton remained in command of the regiment. Moreover, myself and the officer upon whom the command would devolve were not the best of friends; and although this would be of little importance to me as a subaltern in the corps, it would interfere very much with my position as adjutant. This consideration decided me, and I applied for leave at the same time as the Colonel.

Very few days elapsed before the replies were received. My medical certificate was considered quite satisfactory, and the Colonel's claim was, of course, indisputable. So our passages were soon taken in the *Hoogley*, one of Green's best ships, bound for London; and two days before the date of her sailing, we were all safely in Calcutta.

II.

The usual official formalities before departure occupied the greater part of the time we had to spare; but everything was eventually arranged, and almost at the last moment we went on board the *Hoogley*, in high spirits, and prepared to make the best of the monotonous voyage before us.

It was sunset when we went on board, and the ship was to sail at daybreak. Our effects had been embarked before, and most of the preparations were already made. But something still remained to be done in the arrangement of the cabins, &c.; and after I had given as much assistance to the ladies as lay in my power, I was about to pay a little attention to my own comforts, when an unexpected incident put boxes and bedding and all minor matters out of my head for a considerable time.

I had proceeded on deck to search for the purser, who could not be found below, when, looking for'ard, I perceived Colonel Merton hastening towards me, deadly pale, and in a state of agitation such as I had never witnessed in him before. A few rapid strides brought him to my side.

"My dear Aylmar," said he, seizing me convulsively by the shoulder, "go below and bring my

wife up to me at once; I must speak to her on matters of the highest importance. Do not bring Florence, on any account, nor even hint to her that there is anything the matter. Do this, and—oblige me," he added, remembering, I suppose, that his request was a little peremptory.

I should willingly have obeyed a request even more in the form of a command from my old Colonel and dear friend, whose honest and amiable character had completely won my admiration and regard. But the Colonel's strange manner was sufficient to put any such consideration out of my head. I ran below without a moment's hesitation, and fortunately found Mrs. Merton alone in her cabin, Florence being busily engaged in superintending the arrangement of her own domain. She had met with some old acquaintances on board, who were going home in the ship, and was contributing to the conversation which ensued with a vivacity quite unusual to her, even in ordinary times. She had indeed changed during the month that had elapsed since the Colonel made up his mind to go home. The colour had returned to her cheeks, and, though the wild beauty of her eyes still remained, there was nothing in her manner and appearance which recalled her former mysterious state; nothing that might not

appropriately belong to a healthy, happy, and handsome English girl.

I told my mission to Mrs. Merton in a few words, and she accompanied me to the deck. The Colonel was sitting near the capstan, leaning over the back of the seat, his head buried in his hands. Mrs. Merton disengaged herself from my arm and touched her husband on the shoulder. I was about to withdraw, so as not to seem to intrude upon their conversation, when the Colonel roused himself and stood upon his feet.

"No, my friend," said he, anticipating my movement, "do not leave me; I may have to ask a service from you. But first tell me, dear," he said, turning to his wife,—"can you make up your mind to go on shore again with Florence and myself, and postpone our voyage until next month?"

"My dear Charles, you must have taken leave of your senses—after all our boxes are on board, too, and everything nearly arranged in the cabins!"

"Better the boxes should be at the bottom of the sea," pursued the Colonel, "than we encounter the peril that awaits us in this ship."

"I know not what peril you can mean, Charles," said Mrs. Merton, "unless the ship is a bad one, and likely to get lost; in which case, of course,

it would be better not to go in her. But we must remember that the luggage is all in the hold, which is closed, and will not be opened for two or three days."

The Colonel made an exclamation of impatience, and led his wife aside, motioning to me not to leave. The pair talked together for a few minutes, in the course of which Mrs. Merton, I could not but observe, became almost as agitated as her husband had been a short time before. Presently they returned together, when Mrs. Merton left the Colonel and myself together, and proceeded once more below.

A silence followed, broken at last by Colonel Merton, who addressed me with an evident effort,—

"Aylmar, we have been friends, and good friends, for some years; and I know I can trust you. I am placed in a position of danger, which I need your assistance to avert,—if, indeed, it is to be averted at all. But before I can explain its full significance, I must inform you of some family matters, which are known to nobody besides myself, except my wife, my daughter, and one other person. Are you prepared to listen?"

I could not trust myself to speak, but motioned assent. The Colonel continued,—

"It is now nearly ten years ago since the regiment which I have lately commanded was, in the usual course of relief, ordered up country. The corps has been, as you know, half over India in the meantime; but it was then ordered from Barrackpore to Cawnpore. The march was a long one; but as things were quiet in the country, there was nothing to prevent my wife and daughter accompanying me to our new station. They accordingly proceeded with the regiment, travelling, as usual, in palankeens. Florence was at that time (she is now eighteen) scarcely more than eight years old. She was a remarkably forward child for her age, full of the highest animal spirits, and sometimes a little beyond control. But this will happen in a country where children are generally spoiled by servants; and she was so thoroughly good-hearted, and there was such a charm, even then, in her presence, that it was impossible to quarrel with her; and so she became surrounded by a crowd of good-natured persons, who were in a perpetual conspiracy to let her do exactly as she pleased.

"Well, we marched through the greater part of Bengal without adventure, and without any noticeable change, except that Florence, gaining health and strength by the journey, gained also in animal

spirits and audacity. Her natural love of excitement, thus stimulated, brought upon her a terrible disaster.

"It happened one day when we were halted near Shergotty. It was close upon sunset, and we were soon to resume our march. In the cool evenings my wife and daughter very frequently rode on with me at the head of the camp for a few miles, before getting into their palankeens. They were about to do so on this occasion, and Florence, being mounted first, was, as usual, impatient to set out. The tents, however, were not yet struck, and Florence was told to wait for a short time. This she had not the patience to do; but declaring, as I was afterwards told, her intention to ride on a short distance and return, she gave her pony the rein and dashed on ahead at full speed. The *syce* followed as well as he was able, but was soon left hopelessly behind; and the pony and its rider were last seen a mere speck in the distance, a descent in the road then hiding them completely from view. The march was about to commence, when, being mounted myself, I looked about for Florence. A dozen voices were raised in chorus in answer to my inquiries, and a dozen hands pointed in the direction she had taken. Without dreaming of the catastrophe which

was really impending, I still knew that there was great danger involved in a young child proceeding by herself on a lonely road, especially towards nightfall, when the dangers are necessarily doubled both for man and beast. So I put spur to my horse,—it was old Rajah, who at that time went like the wind,—and started in pursuit at full gallop. I must have ridden nearly three miles, looking on ahead and seeing nothing, when Rajah gave a start, followed by a bound from one side of the road to the other, and then stood still, his nostrils distended, his limbs quivering, and his whole body trembling with fright.

"I was not long in finding the cause; which, in truth, frightened me as much as it did my poor horse. The first object I saw lying among the jungle by the side of the road was my daughter's pony, its clean white body disfigured by a hideous wound in the flank, while another laid bare the bones of its neck. Close beside knelt on one knee an officer—I saw at a glance that he wore our undress uniform—supporting my poor little girl, who was in an apparently lifeless state. She was fainting from fright and a severe wound in the shoulder, caused by the claws of some wild-beast, which had torn the flesh in a horrible manner. I

recognized the gentleman supporting her at once, though I had but a slight personal acquaintance with him. He was our assistant-surgeon, who had joined us only on the eve of the march."

"It was Meredith, then?" I interposed.

"Yes," continued the Colonel; "it was Meredith; and it was fortunate that he was a medical man, for his professional ministrations were at once employed in reviving her, and he bound up her shoulder, too, with great care and skill. It seems that he also had been wandering out from camp with his rifle, thinking, perhaps, to meet with a bear; little knowing how much those animals abounded at that time near Shergotty. He was returning in haste, in order to join the camp before its march, when he saw the pony, with poor Florence upon it, walking along the road, to take breath, apparently, after a hard run. Almost at the same instant he saw a tiger—a young but still a large beast—approach stealthily from the jungle, and make a spring at the unfortunate animal, alighting upon the neck, and pulling it down at once. The child, though shaking with fright, managed to extricate herself from the saddle before the pony fell, which she was the better able to do as the tiger made his spring from the off-side of the animal; but, though she had cast off the stirrup, there was some

impediment caused by the habit, and she was thrown to the ground. It was then that the tiger, as if to prevent her from rising, gave her the claw upon the shoulder, to which the thin covering she wore afforded scarcely any protection. The monster had hitherto kept one paw upon the neck of the pony, thus holding him down, and giving him also a heavy blow on the flank to keep him quiet. But his attention being diverted to the child, he was just about to abandon the brute for the human prey, when Meredith came up. The tiger now turned upon the new comer, and man and beast glared at one another for an instant, as if to measure their respective forces. Meredith was the first to act. With rare intrepidity he dashed in to close quarters, and, with the only barrel he had loaded, put a bullet, not into the animal's head, at which he had aimed, but merely into his shoulder. A remarkably good shot at most times, the suddenness of the encounter had unsteadied his hand. It was a terrible crisis. The wounded animal gave a roar of rage on feeling himself hit, which, in nineteen cases out of twenty, is the immediate prelude to a spring. But Meredith by this time had all his nerve at command, and, remembering that a sudden noise will sometimes have the effect of scaring wild-beasts, he raised a

kind of war-whoop, and rushed furiously at the animal, brandishing his rifle, which he held with both hands by the muzzle, above his head at the same time. The chances were greatly against him, but his bold front had the desired effect. The animal hesitated for a second or two, then quailed, turned round, and ran back into the jungle. Meredith had just time to raise my child, who had fallen fainting to the ground, when I came up. The wound which poor Florence had received was of little account compared with the mental shock. It was long before she was restored to consciousness, and was sufficiently revived to be taken back to camp. The colonel (I was only major in the regiment at the time) was humane enough to risk a reprimand, and to stop the march of the regiment that night; and next day our patient was well enough to be moved. The wound was healed in a reasonable time, though the marks still remain; as a general rule almost imperceptible, but under any circumstances of excitement, painfully apparent. The mental malady was more difficult to cure, the more so as there was no fever, which I dare say might have acted as a relief. It was months before the poor little thing was restored to her former self; and even then an occasional relapse gave us a significant warning that she required

the utmost care. The smallest incident which recalled, by any association, that night of horror, was sufficient to produce a state of excitement fraught with both physical and mental danger. Of late years the effect has to a great extent worn off; but that it has not been quite effaced you can, I am afraid, bear testimony. I believe those who have witnessed one of her, happily now rare, attacks, have ascribed them to an ungovernable temper. Those who best know my child are best aware how little the verdict is deserved; but I thought it better that she should suffer even from misrepresentation of the kind than that her name should be bandied about from one end of India to another as the victim of a wild-beast. It was for this reason that Meredith and I agreed to conceal the real nature of the accident which had befallen her; and in camp, nothing seemed more natural than that she should have met with a fall from her horse. I was about to tell you, however, that during the great crisis I gave her over to the treatment of Meredith, who, although very young at the time—having only just received his appointment to the service—had a knowledge of his profession which might be envied by men of twice his years. To his skill and attention I consider I owe the second saving of my girl's life; and his personal

qualities besides being such as could not fail to secure love and esteem, you may imagine that from that time we were sincere friends. He still remained with the regiment after we got into quarters; and during our intimacy there, my little daughter, whose gratitude knew no bounds, always said that when she grew up nobody else but Meredith should be her husband. We only laughed at the idea at the time. The war broke out; the regiment went to the front; Meredith and I saw more than one bloody fight together, and a great deal of arduous campaigning, far away from where the women and children awaited our return. But when the *réunion* did take place, Meredith, of his own accord, avowed his desire that the child's wish should be realized. He offered himself, in fact, for my daughter, who was then little more than sixteen, but greatly advanced for her years. Florence had her own choice in the matter, and accepted him without hesitation; it being arranged, however, that the marriage should not take place for two years. In the meantime you know what has occurred. The silence of Meredith seems inexplicable, but I am still in hopes that it may be explained; and it is to obtain an explanation of some kind that I am on my way to England. That he is alive is certain

enough; otherwise, his death would have been publicly announced in Orders."

I had been so interested in the narrative as to be patient up to this time; but as the Colonel paused, I interposed—

"But, my dear Colonel, you have not told me the nature of your present difficulty, which makes you so reluctant to proceed in this ship."

"Truly," he returned; "you bring me back to my misery, which I had half forgotten. It is simply this—there is a tiger on board."

Such was indeed the fact. A large tiger was shipped, in order to be conveyed to England, for consignment to a zoological garden. It was in a cage which had been stowed for'ard, where first-class passengers, if ladies, would seldom or never venture; but where there was nothing to prevent them from venturing if they chose. The possible danger to Miss Merton from the neighbourhood of the animal was obvious; and the question to be settled was, how to avert the evil. A very short discussion of pros and cons made it apparent that it was too late to change our plans, and wait for the next ship. Apart from other reasons, such an arrangement would be highly undesirable, considering that we had no plausible excuse to assign to Miss Merton

for the change. This alternative was therefore soon rejected, and so our resources became considerably narrowed. At last we agreed to do what any other helpless men must have done under the same circumstances,—to run the hazard of ultimate discovery, and to conceal from Miss Merton, by all means in our power, the presence of the beast on board. For this purpose we resolved to let our few acquaintances among the passengers into the secret, and, with their co-operation, to prevent Miss Merton, if possible, from visiting the fore-part of the ship. The roaring of the animal was a contingency to be dreaded; but we could only hope that the animal would not roar, and that, if it did, it would not be heard.

III.

We weighed anchor on the following morning, and got out of the river without accident. Once at sea, and fairly committed to the course we had agreed upon, we felt comparatively content, although still in a painful state of anxiety; but the feeling wore off by degrees, as we found, day after day, that nothing occurred to justify our fears. This, however,

was owing to our precautions, which we took care never to relax. Whenever Miss Merton went upon deck, one of our party always accompanied her, or kept her in sight. Fortunately for our purpose, the young lady was not inclined to general society; and if any gentleman, of whom she knew but little, offered her his arm, she generally shook him off as soon as possible, and thus discouraged offers of the kind from others. Happily, too, we had fair weather, so that the beast was undisturbed, and not provoked to proclaim his presence. He was of a sullen turn, we found, to our great joy, and seldom disturbed himself for anything but his food; and when this was disposed of, he generally settled himself to sleep. Thus we made our voyage without incident until within some ten days of the Cape, where we were to touch. Up to this point we had been unaware of the severe trial that was in store for us.

I should have mentioned, however, that Miss Merton, from the time she came on board, began to lose her newly-acquired stock of health and animal spirits; and her condition at last grew so serious, that it became desirable to consult a medical man concerning her. But the ship's doctor was unfortunately on the sick-list himself, having been confined to his cabin for a fortnight with a low fever.

I had my doubts whether an ordinary medical man could do any good in the case of Miss Merton, who appeared to me to require some one to "minister to a mind diseased," so settled seemed the melancholy that had taken possession of her.

It was while we were in a state of painful anxiety concerning her that an unexpected event brought matters to a crisis. We were about ten days from the Cape, as I have said, when one morning the look-out man announced a sail on the starboard-bow. In those days vessels did not cross each other with the frequency that they do now upon this route, and the ship was an object of general curiosity. It proved to be a passenger-ship, like our own, and belonging to the same owners; and it immediately occurred to Colonel Merton that we might take advantage of this opportunity to obtain some, at any rate temporary, assistance for the patient. The ship's captain, who was a very kind-hearted man, was quite willing; and when the *Windsor Castle* hove to, the chief-officer, who was going on board of her, was directed to make an application. The chance gave new life to the friends of poor Florence; and we were all greatly overjoyed when, on the boat putting back, we saw *two* persons instead of one sitting in the stern-sheets. A few minutes afterwards

the boat was alongside, and the chief-officer and his companion stepped upon the deck.

At this instant, when the passengers had all assembled to see the strange ship, and hear the news from home—even Florence having been persuaded to arouse herself, weak as she was, and scarcely able to walk without support—a cry of many voices arose from the forecastle, and mingled with it the roar of a wild-beast. Then were heard a clatter as of iron bolts and bars, a rattle of chains, a great rush of feet, a struggle of heavy bodies, and tongues raised in fright and confusion.

The fact was plain to us all—all save one. It was the feeding-hour of the tiger. His attendants were not proof against the common curiosity, and had neglected to fasten his door. The beast had broken loose among us!

The scene was now terrible indeed. "The tiger! the tiger! the tiger!" was echoed by a hundred voices, as the beast came rushing from the forecastle on to the quarter-deck, knocking over all who opposed his way. On the quarter-deck the confusion was even more intense. Ladies ran in all directions, shrieking like maniacs, and dropping one by one as they fainted from fright. Strong men

turned pale, but made a dash at the cutlasses suspended in the cabin hatchway,—the only weapons at hand. I was standing near the Colonel and his family when the alarm was raised. I secured a cutlass and the Colonel another, and we were both in time to take up our position near the ladies by the time the beast came our way. Mrs. Merton dropped upon the deck insensible at the first alarm. Florence kept her senses, but raised a shriek of horror that I shall never forget. The Colonel and myself had no time to pay little attentions; all we could do was to try our best to keep off the tiger. As the beast was making in our direction, we covered the ladies as well as we could by standing before them, and prepared to meet the onslaught. Heaven knows how our weapons, but ill adapted for thrusting, would have availed us; but fortunately they and ourselves were not put to the test. The tiger came rushing on, but before he could reach us some person, armed apparently with an iron bar, interposed between us. Holding the bar with both hands, he brought it down upon the head of the beast with such force as to stun him for a time. The time was short; but a short time was enough. It gave an opportunity to one of the sailors to bring one of the ship's pistols, a ball from which entered

the brain of the brute, who threw up his head to roar, but could utter no sound; a convulsion passed over his frame, and he dropped—dead.

We could now turn to Florence, who by this time was scarcely more alive than the tiger. She revived, however, presently, and our curiosity was next attracted to the person who had met the brute in so courageous a manner. It was the doctor who had come on board from the *Windsor Castle*. I was about, with others near me, to express my gratitude for the signal service he had rendered us, when a new surprise awaited me. The Colonel and the Doctor recognized one another.

"Meredith, you here?"

"Colonel Merton, I certainly did not expect to meet you."

"Nor I you, sir," returned the Colonel, a little haughtily, as he remembered the object of his visit to England.

"My dear Colonel," rejoined Meredith, who was much agitated, "I know you have a right to think all that is bad of me; but trust, all shall be explained."

The Colonel was melted in a moment, and the pair shook hands.

Then came the meeting with Florence; and the

explanations took so long that the *Windsor Castle* was preparing to make sail before they were over. The meeting, however, had changed Meredith's plans; so, instead of returning on board himself, he only sent a boat for his baggage. The two ships then parted company, and we proceeded on our course.

The remainder of the morning was occupied in attendance upon Florence, whose state was rendered still more critical by the new shock. But she revived wonderfully well, and in a few hours ceased to cause anxiety. In the course of the afternoon I learned from the Colonel the circumstances which had led to the unexpected meeting. Meredith had not been in reality the recreant lover he had appeared. His letter written from Gravesend had arrived safely, because he had despatched it himself. Its successors had been intercepted by his father, at whose house he had been staying; the family entertaining objections to the proposed match. For the same reasons his Indian letters were kept from him; and he had been thus cut off from communication with his betrothed. An accident revealed to him the cruel duplicity with which he had been treated; and immediately upon the discovery he lost no time in setting out to India.

Another circumstance also confirmed him in his undertaking, but to this he did not more particularly refer at the time. It was fortunate for him that his leave (of which a considerable extension had been granted him) was not yet out, and that he had deferred making an application to resume duty until his arrival in Calcutta; otherwise, his return home at this juncture would have been attended with unpleasant consequences. As it was, he had full leisure to carry out his present purpose.

Meredith's efforts on behalf of the patient were, as I have said, attended immediately with favourable results. These became more manifest every day, and by the time we arrived at the Cape, Florence was in even better health than when she had set out on the voyage. At the Cape we were detained for a few days, to enable us to repair a slight accident; and here occurred an event which may seem somewhat sudden, compared with the leisurely way of managing such matters prevalent at home. We all went and spent the spare time on shore, as a matter of course; and when we returned on board, a change had occurred in the condition of two of the party, Meredith and Florence being man and wife. The Colonel very

sensibly remarked, that if the persons mainly concerned saw no reason for delay, there was no occasion for others to start difficulties, so his consent was easily obtained; while Mrs. Merton was really so solicitous for her daughter's happiness, that she offered no opposition beyond a few conventional scruples, which were easily overruled.

Our voyage came to an end without further incident. Mrs. Meredith has never had a return of the old symptoms, and the last time I saw her was at the Zoological Gardens; so you may guess that she is not much disturbed by ideas in which wild-beasts are concerned. She was then in perfect health, and looking more beautiful than ever. Meredith did not return to India, after all, but resigned the service for more pleasant and profitable employment at home. His friends all agree that if he is not a happy man he must be hard to please. It is satisfactory, too, to be able to add, that Mrs. Meredith has her ball-dresses made after the same fashion as other ladies, and that no traces of a reason exist for her wearing them, as formerly, high up in the throat.

I should not omit to mention the nature of the incident which decided Meredith upon returning

to India before his leave was up. It was a dream; and this is how he described it to me one night when I had been dining at his house. Mrs. Meredith had retired early; and when we were left to ourselves, our conversation took a serious turn.

"I dreamed," said Meredith, "that I was standing alone in the midst of a wild Indian jungle. I had lost my way. I knew not whither to turn, and was considering how I might shape my course by the sun, which was then sinking in the west, when I heard a sudden rustling in some bushes close by. I had scarcely time to turn, when a young tiger sprang towards me with a bound. I drew back, to place myself on my guard; but the tiger, instead of showing any signs of ferocity, seemed as timid as a hare, crouched at my feet, and plainly sought my protection against some supposed danger. I stooped and stroked its neck, and soothed it as one would a favourite dog. Still it was not pacified, but cried out with fear, shrinking and trembling in every limb. As I renewed my caresses, in order to assure it of my sympathy, the face of the animal changed, and in its place I distinctly saw the features of Florence, her eyes wet with tears, and showing unmistakable signs of distress and terror. The

vision disappeared while I was trying to speak to it, and then I woke with a start. But it remained so strongly impressed upon my mind as to decide me upon returning to India.

"I did not mention to you at the time, by the way,—I did not mention it to anybody, indeed, but the Colonel,—that the tiger we killed on board the *Hoogley* was the same as the one that had attacked poor Florence when she was a child. The Shergotty one could not have been more than a couple of years old, and the apparent age of the one they were bringing home would correspond exactly with the time that has since elapsed. Moreover, I have another proof. I superintended the operation of taking that rug off him."

(I was sitting with my feet on a tiger-skin rug —preserved with the skull and claws on, in a very sportsman-like manner—before Meredith's study-fire.)

"Well," continued Meredith, "if you look at the skin, you will find a bullet-hole in the shoulder; and here is the bullet I took from the flesh underneath. I always carry it about with me — there may be a charm in it."

And as he spoke he took from a little bag, which he wore round his neck, a rifle-bullet of a conical

shape, somewhat flattened near the point, as it might be had it come in contact with a hard substance like a bone.

I did not like to make the remark, but I could not help remembering that conical bullets were not used at the time when the Shergotty adventure came to pass. Meredith, however, anticipated my objection.

"The shape of the bullet," said he, "I consider conclusive evidence. This one, you will observe, although conical, does not altogether resemble those now in use. Its peculiarities enable me to identify it as one of a batch that I had cast by way of experiment; for it occurred to me, as it did to many other men, years ago, that the spherical shaped bullet was not the most effective. Moreover, this bullet fits the rifle which I used at the time perfectly."

After these facts I was not disposed to make any objection as to the identity of the tiger. But the remembrance of the strange story in which it was concerned set me thinking. However, I did no more than make a vague remark to the effect that the circumstances which had been recalled to my recollection were of a "very curious" character.

"Very curious, indeed," echoed Meredith, musingly. "Of course every circumstance, from the adventure at Shergotty to the death of the tiger on board the *Hoogley*, can be accounted for by purely natural causes. What more natural than that I, being out prowling for prey, should come across my future wife, who was playing truant from the camp? What more natural than that, for the little service I was able to render her, she should be very grateful to me as a child, and very loving to me as a woman? What more natural than that she should pine away and grow wild when she thought I had jilted her? What more natural than that she should be revived by the excitement of going home, and fail in strength as the excitement wore off? What more natural than that she should recover under my professional attendance? —my non-professional presence having, I will admit, just a little to do with it. And as for my dream, nothing could be more natural than that. All of my mind that was not full of Florence was occupied with tigers; and when I dreamed in earnest, of course I dreamed of both. It may be that there were other influences at work, and that the relations between Florence and the tiger and myself were of a less comprehensible character.

But it is of no use talking about things that we don't understand, and I think we shall both sleep more pleasantly to-night if we agree to consider the whole affair as nothing more than a striking adventure, a mental shock, and a couple of curious coincidences."

IX.

PUNCH IN INDIA.

PUNCH in India. The idea seems unpromising. A professed jester must surely be out of place among a people who have but little turn for comedy. The Asiatic temperament is solemn, and finds no enjoyment in fun for its own sake. A Bengalee or an Hindustanee can laugh at what is ridiculous; but his laughter is contemptuous, and it may be malignant. It knows little of the loving quality of humour. For such people, Punch must be libellous and cruel, to the outrage of all law and humanity. Look, too, at the incongruity of the thing. Fancy Punch among palm-trees and palaces all domes and minarets, and going about in a palankeen. Fancy him deep in the silent jungle, or out on the arid plain. Fancy him scorched by a burning sun whenever abroad, and bored by inane enjoyments whenever at home—with hookahs of sickly scent,

dancers of monotonous motion, fiddlers of soulless music. Fancy him—but there is no need to fancy anything of the kind. Not for the indolent Asiatic does Punch disport himself in India, but for the active European; not for dreamers and drivellers, inhalers of hookahs and patrons of zenanas; but for stickers of pigs, smokers of cheroots, drinkers of brandy-panee. It is to our brave and fair compatriots in the East that Punch appeals, and it is in the jocose illustration of their manners and customs that he finds his principal sport. The natives are not forgotten; but when they are remembered, it is generally less for their own amusement than that of other people.

I have before me a volume of the Indian "Punch," of the old series, which was published under the name of the "Delhi Sketch Book." It appeared during the administration of the Marquis of Dalhousie, when mutinies and massacres were as yet undreamed of, and when Indian society retained most of the old characteristics, of which the last are now fast being effaced; when the policy of the government was to "respect the prejudices of the natives," and annex as much of their territory as possible; when white jackets were still admissible for evening dress, and black ladies were still

presentable as wives; when the smoking of hookahs was not yet considered the practice of a barbarous age, and elderly gentlemen even ventured to take them out to dinner parties; when the divinity that did hedge the civil service was unprofaned by the system of competition; when the Company's officer was everywhere, and the Queen's officer nowhere, in the race for appointments; when subaltern officers were supposed to be always in debt, and often in liquor; when a ball was necessarily followed by a supper, and the supper was frequently followed by a "row," and a duel next morning; when play was high and morals —— but I will not venture on the antithesis. Suffice it that the period in question, though comparatively recent, still bore considerable relation to the good old times, when a great many things were different from a great many other things, and when very few things were exactly as they are in the present day: the later period being much the gainer in the majority of instances, sentimental prejudices to the contrary notwithstanding.

First impressions of publications, as well as persons, are formed from outward appearance. The "Delhi Sketch Book" would scarcely command a favourable judgment at first sight. Its mechanical

arrangements are decidedly weak. In form, it resembles its English original; but its execution is not comparable. The typography is rude, and is sadly wanting in revision. The illustrations—even those interspersed with the letter-press—are drawn on stone, and make a very poor appearance beside well cut, or even ill cut, wood engravings. There are marks of haste and carelessness in almost every page. And well there may be; for we are continually informed by the editor (who addresses his readers upon the state and prospects of the journal whenever he feels inclined) that his appliances and means are of a most meagre description. He has never been able to get a good lithographer; his amateur contributors cannot draw on stone; and the transfer of their sketches from paper is no easy matter, considering the crude state in which they are sent. It is therefore no wonder that lines, which should be soft, turn up hard; that some lines are scarcely produced at all; that a shadow occasionally looks very like a smudge. The pictorial as well as the literary contributions are generally sent from long distances, and they have no advantage of correction from their authors; only those, therefore, which come from the pen or pencil of the editor himself, have anything

like a fair chance. On the whole, considering the many reasons why the work should not be produced, the result is by no means discreditable to the efforts employed to bring it into the world. This is usually the apologetic opinion expressed by the editor, and with considerable reason. It must be said, too, for the "Delhi Sketch Book," that—too often expressed in a rude and even coarse manner—it includes a great deal of artistic and literary merit. Its range of subjects are, as may be supposed, rather circumscribed. The members of the services, in past times more than in the present, may be said to have monopolized society in India, and, being the principal purchasers of the publication, as well as the principal contributors to its pages—both with pen and pencil—it may be supposed that the topics treated were those mainly interesting to themselves. Accordingly, the "Delhi Sketch Book" presents us with a nearer view of military and official life than any periodical published in this country, and exhibits a correctness of detail which we could not look for in London without a great chance of being disappointed—except, indeed, in the drawings of Mr. Leech, who had a familiar hand for military subjects, and evinced an adjutant's accuracy in saddles, sabres, bits, and even buttons.

The satire of "Punch" in India is a reflexion of mess and club gossip, with a dash of the drawing-room and the field. We find no illustrations of precocious London youth, no scenes taken out of the streets and parks. There are no cabmen or omnibus-conductors to hang jokes upon. Servant-galism is rare, and flunkeyism almost unknown—for European female servants usually marry off as soon as they land, and I doubt if a dozen private persons in the country have European men-servants, unless they be soldiers. Even the British swell —without whom the London caricaturist would languish and die—is not represented in his own element, but as a fish out of water, whose agonies are so intense as to excite sympathy rather than laughter. But, in revenge for these omissions, we find several new subjects for satire and food for fun. The Governor-General is, of course, a standing joke, and so is the Commander-in-Chief. Such profanity must be expected in a periodical inspired to so large a degree as the "Delhi Sketch Book" by the subaltern mind, civil or military. But I am bound to admit that both Lord Dalhousie and Sir Charles Napier are treated with all due respect, and that, although held up to nature in a humorous mirror, there is no attempt to insult them or bring them into contempt.

The references to Sir William Gomm, Sir Charles Napier's successor, are not always so courteous.

The first sketch which catches the eye is entitled "Ye Manners and Customs of ye English Officers in Pegu." It occupies the whole page, and represents a ball at which there are no ladies present: their places being supplied by men, who are dancing away with one another on a toe which appears something more than light and fantastic. Two young officers who have been waltzing together have come down upon the big drum, under which the player is seen gasping for life. Other couples are reeling about, and it is evident that the mirth is of no methodistical character. Accompanying the illustration is a descriptive letter, the writer of which, tempted apparently by the alliterative coincidence of "Polka" and "Pegu," has conveyed his ideas, with the exception of an occasional conjunction, in words beginning with the letter *p*. Thus he tells the editor that he is "perpetually putting polka parties into his periodical, and plaguing the poor Peguans with pictures of pretty girls pirouetting under punkahs, with precocious partners,"—insomuch that the Peguans are "pained and piqued to perceive that they cannot participate in the partiality which they prognosticate is purchased at their expense,"—

and so on through the greater part of a page; the editor bringing the joke to a conclusion by remarking that "his valued correspondent must be a member of the *p*'s society." After this exhibition of cheerfulness, we are treated to a couple of pages of rather elaborate mystification, supposed to be put forth by a senior captain for the benefit of a cadet, or griffin, just arrived from England. The captain tries to frighten the griff with horrible stories of the country, and to lead him into scrapes such as were experienced by our young friend Peter Simple, under similar circumstances. This is a favourite theme, and may be found illustrated passim. Overlooking several subjects of an incomprehensibly local character—to the English reader—I come to a large "page cut" of "An Indian Interior—the Subaltern's Quarters." This is very well depicted, and a great deal too true to life to represent a scene of great elegance or refinement. The apartment has the plain and evidently whitewashed walls common to bungalows in the Mofussil: the only reliefs from their monotony are—first, a bookcase containing a very small allowance of books and a very large allowance of cheroot-boxes, racquet-bats, and other materials for unintellectual amusement; second, a pair of buck's-horns displayed in true sporting style,

with a hunting-whip resting upon them; third, some movable pegs for hats; fourth, a shaving-glass; fifth, a line on which are hung cravats in tempting variety; sixth, a pair of horse-pistols, surmounted by a pair of spurs; seventh, a travelling-bag and a forage-cap. Against the wall stand a couple of wild boar spears, a cricket-bat, a sword, a row of boots, and—apparently quite a matter of detail—there is a bed in one corner. In the middle of the room, seated at a rough camp table, are the proprietor of the apartment and a friend who is apparently passing the morning with him. Both are half undressed and in a state of intense *négligé*, both are smoking, and both are playing at cards, notwithstanding that one has his feet upon the table. Above their heads the punkah is being swung with great motion; and the window, opening to the ground, is occupied by a khu-skhus tattie—that is to say, a screen of a peculiar scented grass, the use of which I have already described. In the vacant recess of the window, exposed to the full current of air, are some bottles of soda-water, and other bottles evidently containing stronger liquid; with one of which, or a probable combination of the two, one of the youths is already refreshing himself. Under the table is crouched a bull-dog of

hideous aspect—an animal which is the usual companion of the British subaltern in India, according to the authority of caricatures. In a drawing farther on, in which we are favoured with another representation of a subaltern's quarters, a dozen dogs at least are represented as making a ferocious attack upon the sub's commanding officer, paying a visit of ceremony, and received by the sub while lying on his bed, in a state of undress, as usual, smoking a cheroot and reading a newspaper.

The junior ensign, or griff, is a great character all through the volume, where he serves as a representative of the rising generation, and is continually astonishing the weak minds of senior officers of the old school by the audacity of his ideas, and his vigorous views of life. We see him at a mess, or rather in the ante-room where that sherry is discussed which relieves waiting for dinner of half its horrors. He has the decanter in his hand, and addresses one of the senior captains of the regiment. The contrast between the slim figure of the youth, displayed by the shell jacket, and the more full proportions of Captain Bumptious, also displayed by the shell jacket, and reinforced by abundant whiskers, adds not a little to the effect:—

"I say, Bumptious, is this to be a public night?"

Bumptious replies that he is not sure, but supposes so; to which the ensign rejoins,—

"Well, only let's know before the lushing begins."

But the griff sometimes appears in a different light, and bewilders his seniors, not only by his worldly decision of character, but by his intellectual acquirements, which need to be of no common order in these days of examinations. Here is another scene at a mess-table after dinner:—

"1ST GRIFF (addressing his friend). No, really, pardon me; the species you mention is a highly metamorphic hornblendic or sienitic gneiss, the hollows of which are filled up by a detritus proceeding from the simple disintegration in situ of the more felspathic surface.

"OLD MAJOR (labouring under the impression that objectionable language is going on on the other side of the table). Order, there! Young gentlemen, order!"

The griff is, of course, included under the general description of the subaltern, and the subaltern, when he ceases to be a griff, is always supposed to be sowing the wildest possible oats, and leading a life of such rapidity as to outstrip most of the

forms and many of the proprieties of society. These characteristics furnish food for endless illustration, but as the satire upon the class usually comes from "one of themselves," it seldom passes the limits of becoming mirth. In fact, the subaltern is a decided favourite with "Punch" in India, and the source—in more ways than one—of some of his most amusing hits.

The class jealousies of the services, which are apt to be very strongly exhibited in India, are a favourite theme for the local satirist. These are founded upon divisions and sub-divisions; but the main difference is, of course, between civil and military. The civil service is the better paid of the two; it also monopolizes most of the highest appointments of the State. The civilians are, therefore, the favoured section of the community. They have the most potent influence in public, and they take the lead in society, where the black coat is always held in greater respect than the red, especially by match-making mammas, who are often heard to say that their daughters shall never marry into the barracks. The civilians are naturally proud of their superior position, and are accused by severe censors of "giving themselves airs" on account thereof. Bitter are the

sarcasms with which they are assailed in consequence; and, it must be said in their favour, they bear them with immense fortitude. But there are two sides to the picture. The civilians, though enjoying the lion's share of the loaves and fishes of the State, are not quite happy. They are unappreciated in Europe, where people cannot be made to understand the nature of the duties they have to perform. The British public can comprehend the office of a Magistrate or a Judge, but the office of a Collector puzzles them, and they usually imagine that these administrators of the revenue department go about with a portable pen and ink, and leave slips of paper at people's houses, with "Last Application" printed in red letters. Nor are the duties even of the higher rank of "Commissioner" much more comprehensible; except, indeed, by popular prejudice, which associates the office with a great deal of "grinding down" of the natives, and the exercise of arbitrary power. And it happens, unfortunately for the civilians, that the legal posts are exactly those for which they have always been supposed least fit, and of which recent legislation has deprived them altogether. The military, on the other hand (I allude more especially to the old "Company's army"),

exercise a vocation which cannot be mistaken. They are called Captains, Colonels, and so forth, like the military everywhere else. They have always done their work well, when there has been any fighting to do; some among them have made great names, not only in the field but in the political arena—the latter being the only arena in which the civilians have had a chance of gaining their fair share of honour. The military having more leisure for the cultivation of literature and art, besides being the larger class, exercise a greater influence over the local "Punch" than the members of the sister service. Accordingly, we find scenes like the following not unfrequent in the pictorial department. The sketch represents two over-dressed young gentlemen, sucking their walking-canes :—

"1ST HAILEYBURY MAN (who has carried off fifteen gold medals and six silver). I say, fancy, that demmed Ensign has gone and plucked me again!

"2ND DITTO. Dem him! He's plucked me, too.

"1ST. But the best of it is, he says I can't speak intelligibly!

"2ND. Gad! like his impudence.

"(Exeunt ye two Alumni in frantic haste to Mr. Spence, hys refreshment room.)"

Another favourite hit at this much-badgered service is a ball-room scene. A mild-looking young civilian reminds a young lady of her engagement to him for a waltz, just as she is about to surrender her waist to a cavalry officer of imposing appearance. The young lady is a little confused, but the cavalry officer takes possession of her with great composure, carelessly assuring the civilian that "there must have been some mistake."

But there are wheels within wheels, as we have hinted, and the rivalry between cavalry and infantry gives great opportunity for satire. Here is a scene at an infantry mess, at which are two cavalry officers, belonging respectively to Her Majesty's Light Dragoons and the East India Company's Light Cavalry:—

"DRAGOON. I say, Frank—aw—aw—it's—aw—dev—aw—lish gratifying to aw—remark—aw—the superiority—aw—in polish and ton—aw—of our service over—aw—the infantry.

"LIGHT CAVALRY MAN. Yes—and—and there's a—ha—ah, generally a—a—a—ha, there's eh—heh—a—ha, greater degree of eh—a what's—its—name—eh—intelligence you know—eh—ah that's—intelligence you know—ha—among our men."

The infantry officers are represented as looking on, highly amused at this modest opinion. A little farther on (in the book) they take their revenge. A Cornet, who has passed his riding school, has got a mount from an infantry friend, and after bragging a great deal about liking a horse with some "go" in him, is coming to awful grief, in consequence of a little good-natured "bucking" on the part of the animal. The infantry man, who has himself a first-rate seat, is slyly enjoying his friend's discomfiture. That the infantry are much better horsemen than the cavalry, is an assertion you hear frequently repeated among the members of the former arm of the service; and it appears to be thus far true—that the best officers of Irregular cavalry have nearly always belonged to infantry regiments. Hodson and Jacob, for instance, were infantry officers, as are Beatson, Edwardes, and Chamberlain, and nearly all the beaux sabreurs of the Indian army. The native Regular cavalry has never been a good school. It made a handsome appearance on parade, and answered very well for guards and escorts; but it was fit for little more, and on two or three occasions (the mention of Kotah and Purwan Durrah are never calculated to put a Regular cavalry officer in a good humour) it distinguished itself by something

very like bad behaviour. It was a great mistake ever to have attempted to make a dragoon, all pipe-clay and precision, out of a native accustomed to easy costume, and an entirely different discipline. That the Regular cavalry turned out no worse than it did, is highly creditable to its European officers, who made the best that could be made of a bad system.

The contests—vigorously carried on in newspapers and pamphlets—between the Regulars and Irregulars, supply a large proportion of jokes to "our facetious contemporary." These are mostly too professional to bear reproduction. There are, however, some social hits at the peculiarities of the Irregulars, which are more comprehensible in this country. The Irregulars are always famous for their fantastic uniforms, and usually present an appearance which has been summed up as "all beard and boots." They have a foreign rather than a British appearance, and, from serving in wild parts of the country where no ladies are to be met with, are supposed to have incurred savage habits. In one of the cuts before me an Irregular officer, who has, it may be supposed, returned on leave to within the pale of civilization, presents himself at his own house, bearded and braided in orthodox

manner. His wife receives him with "Merci, Monsieur, nous n'avons pas d'un maître de musique."

There was no little rivalry, as may be supposed, between the "Queen's" and "Company's" armies, and although they are now nominally united, a great deal of the old spirit still exists. "The Royals in India" forms a standing heading in the pages of our friend "Punch," and you may be sure they are represented in as ridiculous a light as is possible, even in a country where a man is always supposed to spend the first year of his residence in making a fool of himself. How the Royals get into trouble and fall into ridiculous mistakes through their ignorance of the native language, how they come to grief in horseflesh, and get imposed upon in every transaction with their servants, is recorded in countless caricatures, and comic verse and prose without end. The social superiority assumed by the Royals is one of the most popular themes for satire, whether of pencil or pen. An officer of this class is, to judge by the squibs let off upon him, supposed to look at all things Indian through the eye-glass of superciliousness, and to speak of them with the haw-haw of contempt. As when, for instance, Captain Raker, in answer to an affable

inquiry from the lady of the house whether he dances, responds with a superb air, "Why—ha!—not in India! You see, I have been so accustomed to the best society at London parties, that I cannot really fall into your semi-barbarous customs all at once." Or when Captain Swellington, in acknowledgment of the old-fashioned invitation from a cheerful Indian to take wine with him, replies, after a slight stare through his glass, "Ah, yes, I will—upon one condition—that you won't say 'Here's to you,'—because I can't stand that."

While upon military rivalries I should not omit to mention the moustache. It was not until 1853 that this "boon" was given to the infantry regiments of the Indian army. They had hitherto been shaven, like their brethren of the Queen's; but it being considered, all of a sudden, that the want of the manly appendage degraded both officers and men in the eyes of the natives, the order came out to leave the upper lip sacred from the touch of the razor. This entrenchment on their peculiar privilege is supposed to have disgusted the cavalry, who, according to the caricatures and poetical satirists, seriously desired to shave. The Queen's regiments remained untouched by the innovation until after the Crimean war, when they also were directed

to grow the moustache. The "Sketch Book" of the period of course had jokes upon this subject also; the officers of Her Majesty's service being displeased with an arrangement which, as they said, confounded them with those Native Infantry fellows! According to the same authority, even the non-commissioned officers and men partook of the prevalent prejudice against the Company's troops. Here is a specimen of the *esprit de corps* of the non-commissioned ranks, as recorded by one of the Delhi artists:—

The wife of an Indian officer is represented as desirous of engaging one of the barrack ladies as a maid. Mrs. Corporal Flouncey accordingly offers herself; but, upon inquiring into the position of the lady's husband, pays a visit of apology. "Why, you see, marm," says Mrs. Corporal Flouncey, "it isn't the wages—which is quite satisfactory—but I've been and spoke to my husband, and he have objections to my taking service with the lady of a sepoy officer."

Among the social peculiarities which afford perennial food to the local "Punch" are those connected with marriage, which, it must be admitted, is rather a rapid process in India, where people have seldom time for long engagements, and where single

ladies—in the provinces at any rate—are so scarce as to be caught up with celerity. In India, however, as elsewhere, it is not every spinster (or "spin," as she is called in that irreverent country) who can afford to tamper very long with her admirers, or rely too literally on the assertion of Mrs. Peachum in the Beggar's Opera, that by keeping men off you keep them on. One of the saddest satires in the collection before me is a series of drawings, descriptive of "The Spinster—her Progress," from the time when she treats even "big civilians" with hauteur, down to that when she is compelled to put up with a penniless Ensign. In illustration of the series, there is a song in imitation of a well-known original. It is called "The Song of the Spin," and the first stanza is as follows:—

With footsteps weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A lady was seen in a ball-room dress,
Betaking herself to bed.
Flirt—flirt—flirt!
With beauty, but wanting in *tin*,
This unfortunate damsel, half weeping, half pert,
Thus sang the Song of the Spin.

And so on, in a manner which may be imagined, until we come to—

Flirt—flirt—flirt!
My labour never ends;
And with what reward? An Ensign raw,
Without money, talent, or friends—
A shabby buggy, a worn-out horse,
A hovel, and that is all;
For an Ensign's pay, in the present day,
Is unjustifiably small!

Parodies of the same immortal poem are very plentiful in this volume. It is made to do duty for all kinds of occasions. One of the best is "the Song of the Shirk," *i.e.* one who shams illness, and makes other excuses to evade duty. The next most popular poem for parody is "Locksley Hall." Some of the parodies are particularly neat, but they are too professional to be enjoyed by the general public, and they have sometimes a vigour about them which might be mistaken for coarseness—a fault which applies too frequently to Anglo-Indian comic literature. One of the best in the present volume describes a batch of cadets going before "the Board" after their appointments. It opens in the orthodox manner—

See the youths all onward trooping, handsome, ugly, short, and tall,
Pressing forward, pressing forward, to the street of Leadenhall.

As a general rule, I find that subjects popular in

the London "Punch" are very punctually taken up and adapted to Indian manners. Thus we have "Mr. Pips, his Diary," drawings and descriptions both on the model of the original. Mr. Pips goes to a Nautch, Mr. Pips goes to a Barra Khana, Mr. Pips goes to a Review, and Mr. Pips goes everywhere else worth drawing or writing about. In the same manner we have the "Dramas of Every-day Life" reproduced upon the plan of the original papers, and made the vehicle for a great deal of local satire. Among the most popular subjects of ridicule in any form, are those connected with sick-leave, the examination system, the purchase of steps, committees, the delays of the post-office, patronage, and courts-martial. In the present volume I see several bits of sick-leave, both pictorial and literary. In one of the former a young officer is seated with his feet on the table, smoking cheroots, and drinking brandy-panee. The doctor pays him a visit, in answer to a summons, as we may presume, and the officer asks him to give him a certificate that he is too sick for duty, and must go for three months to the Hills. The doctor, however, is not so pliant as was expected. "What do you see in my face," he asks, "to make you suppose that I should sign a false document?" "Well, you

can do as you please," is the answer; "but if you decline, I must change my medical attendant." A wicked sarcasm at the examination system is contained in the representation of an elderly officer, all smiles and urbanity, described as "the president of the examining committee when he congratulated Ensign Green upon having passed so admirable an examination;" the same officer being portrayed in a companion portrait in a high state of disgust, excited by the discovery "that it wasn't *that* Green who was such a favourite with the Governor-General."

A great many jokes are got out of the purchasing of steps: that is to say, the buying out of officers willing to retire for a consideration, in order that the rest may get promotion—which in a seniority service must follow as a matter of course. The practice has been prohibited from time to time, but it has been practically winked at by government, and existed for many years almost like a regulation of the service. It was not a little abused, as the younger officers, down to the junior ensign, were drawn into subscriptions for the purpose, which they could ill afford to pay, and from which they could derive no possible advantage for years; but in all "smart" regiments it was a rule that every

officer must join in the arrangement, or be sent to Coventry. When an officer retired, it followed naturally that only one of his juniors obtained a positive elevation of rank, the remainder of them being content with getting higher on the list. In one sketch I find the officer who is obtaining the principal advantage arguing thus:—"You see, gentlemen, that as I get the step this way I am shut out from getting it in any other; therefore it is plain that I should be called upon to pay a smaller proportion than anybody else." An ingenious argument, which is evidently having its effect upon the intelligent auditory.

The committee system has been a fertile source of laughter for years. It was in great force under the old Company, when officers, not less than three in number, were selected to transact garrison business of every description. At one time they would have to buy elephants or camels. They might never have seen an elephant or camel, but so that they agreed to pass or condemn them the authorities were satisfied. If a couple of tiles required to be put on the roof of a barrack, nobody had authority to give the order but through a committee. If beer had to be purchased for the troops, a committee must proceed at five o'clock in the morning to taste it; and as

this process had frequently to be gone through with a great many varieties, the result was sometimes scandalous, especially in the case of the younger officers. But what can be expected from a "tasting committee" that has to transact its business before breakfast? These committees were held for the greatest as well as the most insignificant objects. Among the latter, I once heard of a committee upon an old pair of sepoy's pantaloons.

As for the post-office, the institution is one of the best-abused of the public establishments, even in this country. You may guess what it is in India, where its means are of a rough-and-ready description, where railways are far from being everywhere, and where the distances to be traversed are immense. Pictures of the dâk wallahs sitting by the roadside smoking their pipes, one with the bag labelled "Express" being fast asleep, are in great profusion; and the postmaster-general is always represented as filling up the vans, to the exclusion of the public letters, with bonnets for his wife and cases of wine for himself. These are always popular satires, especially if the official is made to look sufficiently hideous.

Patronage! Well, you may guess the use which is made of that subject in a comic publication, the

readers of which are nearly all composed of members of one service or the other, desperate for promotion, and comprising some fifty expectants for every place. Courts-martial! We know something about those tribunals in this country, and as "cases" are far more frequent in India, it may be supposed that there is more material for ridicule. Hard riding, generally indulged in by ladies in the Hills, is a theme that never ends; and the only advantage to be derived from it, to counterbalance all the danger to themselves and others which it involves, is, that it gives the artistic satirists subjects for very pretty pictures—affording a real relief from the sour old generals and ugly people generally, whom Indian artists delight to portray.

Among the most elaborate of the illustrations in the present volume is a pair of "page cuts," representing contrasts in Anglo-Indian life, under the name of "The Old School and the New."

Each picture contains several classifications. No. 1, "Domestic," shows us the father of a family smoking a hookah, and drinking brandy-panee, in company with a very unfavourable specimen of the female sex, who can be neither a good wife (if she be a wife) nor a good mother; for the children who are sprawling about are evidently the reverse of

"well brought up." In contrast to this representation of a home as it was, we are shown a home as it is. A lady of high mental acquirements is playing on the piano, while several visitors stand about in attitudes of intelligence. There is no refreshment of any kind to be seen, and the only perceptible cloud on the happiness of the party is the appearance of a native clerk in the distance, who presents to the husband a bond in favour of the Agra Bank, apparently for payment. But it may be that this little incident is only intended to show the flourishing state of the husband's credit, and not to point an unpleasant moral. No. 2, "Social," exhibits on the one side a drunken party of revellers, with bottles in their hands; on the other, an elegant drawing-room, where the same persons are seen under the refining influence of female society, indulging in a carpet dance. No. 3, "Commercial," shows us, on the one side, a British merchant in his shirt-sleeves, just risen from his brandy-panee to kick out a native clerk who approaches him with a bill; on the other, a native merchant is suing an officer in a military court upon an I O U. No. 4 is "Professional," and the contrast here is more decided. The old school is represented as enforcing discipline on the soldiers by means of the "cat;"

the new, as enforcing efficiency on the heads of departments by an almost equally severe system: the Commander-in-Chief (Sir Charles Napier) being represented as a tyrannical schoolmaster keeping his boys to their tasks by threats of condign punishment. No. 5, "Recreational," represents, in the first place, a nautch, at which native dancers are performing for the amusement of a party of officers; in the second place, the same officers are disporting themselves in a more vigorous manner in a dog-cart, with a tandem.

It will be seen that the new school is not considered by the satirist to be quite what it ought to be, but that it is still a considerable improvement upon the old school. He leads us to infer that, although the Anglo-Indians may still be fond of pleasure, it is pleasure of a purer kind than of yore; and that although they may incur debts which they can ill afford to pay, they do not kick the creditor for suggesting payment.

This slight attempt to forestal "the future Macaulay" in raking up out-of-the-way materials in illustration of history, must not be concluded without a glance at the impersonation of the Indian Punch as pictured in these pages. As far as face and figure —that is to say, nose and hump—are concerned,

he bears a strong family likeness to his English brother; but the Indian Punch wears a turban, and has otherwise accommodated himself to "the prejudices of the natives." Instead of the dog Toby, his attendant is a monkey with a ring tail, and a remarkably intelligent cast of countenance.

The "Delhi Sketch Book" has had two successors—the "Indian Punch" and "Punch in India." Their characteristics are essentially the same. "Punch in India" still flourishes in Bombay—not merely in the old-fashioned sense of the word, for it seems to be a decided success.

X.

ANGLO-INDIAN LITERATURE.

THE educated classes of our countrymen in India, condemned as they are, in most places, and during the greater portion of the year, to pass more hours under shelter from the sun than are demanded by their daily duties (this is more particularly the case as regards military men), have, as a general rule, only two resources against intellectual vacancy — to addict themselves to cheroots and brandy-panee, or take to their books and become ornaments to society. They may attach themselves to such "strenuous idleness" as is afforded by billiards and other games of skill, or to such stirring excitements as are derived from Blind Hookey, or other fascinating inventions for winning other people's money or losing their own. But these devices for killing time must soon give way; if for no other reason,

for the one that they are incapable of progress or development. A prisoner who turns a crank would work with comparative satisfaction if he knew he was grinding something; and the cultivators of idleness feel much the same, especially those who find the experiment attended by pecuniary loss. As for the brandy-panee resource, it is due to our countrymen in the East to say that it has gone quite out of fashion, its only representatives in the present day being, perhaps, some melancholy civilian who, in the solitude of the Mofussil, cultivates a morbid sentiment for home, or some subaltern officer who is too much in debt to be capable of interesting himself in ordinary affairs, so seeks relief in refreshment, does not find it, and gets cashiered instead—after which, he drinks more than ever, and eventually dies, Heaven knows how!

It follows that the larger proportion of sane and sound men consent to become ornaments to society. (I here refer principally to those in civil or military employ; for the mercantile classes in India are too constantly occupied in making their fortunes to attend much to mere intellectual pursuits.) Some spend their long hours of leisure during the hot weather in learning a language

or a science, studying the history of a country or a period, or making investigations of various kinds, which they probably contribute to the Government records. But many attach themselves to more direct literary pursuits, and, besides producing independent works in various departments, including, of course, fiction, contribute extensively to the periodical press, from quarterly reviews to daily newspapers.

It may be asked, Where are the fruits of all this literary activity? It must be admitted, in answer, that the best days of local publications, other than newspapers, are past—to judge by present appearances. But, before I advert to the causes accounting for this decline, a brief glance at the former state of periodical literature in India may not be unacceptable. Without going back to the earliest publications, which would carry us beyond the present century, a sufficient idea may be given by starting from times which most "old Indians" will remember—recognizing the fact that "old Indians" remember more than most people, as they were more bound up with the country than residents of a later generation, and seldom troubled themselves about so insignificant a place as Europe.

There are many "old Indians" yet who remember the Calcutta "Oriental Magazine and Quarterly Review," continued as the "Quarterly Oriental Magazine and Review," reaching, from the first issue of the former in 1824, to eight volumes. These publications were under the editorship of Horace Hayman Wilson, and among the contributors were Dr. Tytler, Mr. Vans Kennedy, Mr. Ellis, and others known to more than local fame. Devoted particularly to Oriental matters, they were written with a high order of ability—as may be inferred from the names here cited, not to mention the others. The present "Calcutta Review" is also a generally well-written work. It has extended to many volumes, and has suffered several changes of proprietorship. Among its contributors may be noted the late Sir Henry Lawrence, Mr. Temple, and many of the best "Punjab men," Major D. L. Richardson, Mr. H. G. Keene, &c. The "Bengal Sporting Magazine," starting in 1834, lived until 1841. It was followed by the "Calcutta Sporting Review," which had a highly vivacious existence until it was killed by the mutinies of 1857—nearly all its contributors being besieged somewhere or engaged in besieging somebody, and its editor, Mr. James Hume, the senior

magistrate of Calcutta, not being able to find sufficient aid at hand to support it. People in Calcutta at that time would read nothing but politics; so the review was thrown over until happier times, and in its place appeared the "Indian Field," which, between pigsticking and politics, enjoyed, for a time, a very vigorous existence. Of a necessarily different character was the "Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal," a branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, which has branches also at Bombay and Madras. This is one of the most important publications which have appeared in India. It is still flourishing, and numbers between thirty and forty volumes. Its first editor was James Prinsep. It was the successor to "Gleanings of Science," — edited also by Prinsep, among whose *collaborateurs* were Horace Hayman Wilson and B. H. Hodgson, — a publication which had been preceded by "Asiatic Researches." Without being precise to the date, I may next mention the "Journal of Natural History," which reached four volumes, and the "Indian Journal of Medical Science," edited by Dr. Norman Chevers, which achieved ten volumes. Of religious publications there were, and still are, a considerable variety. Thus we find, taking them at random,

the "Christian Intelligencer," which has been published between thirty and forty years, and is still alive; and the "Calcutta Christian Observer," which has appeared ever since 1832. I do not pretend to complete the list, but may refer to the "Bengal Catholic Expositor" and "Bengal Catholic Herald" as representatives of the Roman Catholic form of Christianity.

Among the periodicals published in Bombay may be noticed the "Oriental Quarterly," an admirably written review. It is no longer in existence, but is well remembered for many able articles—one, particularly, on the Travels of Bishop Heber, pointing out many important mistakes on the part of its learned author, which, however, do not seem to impair the confidence with which his work is still regarded in this country. The "Bombay Quarterly Magazine and Review" was a successor of the above. It reached three volumes, from 1850 to 1853. It was, in its turn, succeeded by the "Bombay Quarterly," which commenced in 1855 and was concluded in 1858, being a victim of the mutinies, like more than one of its contemporaries. Among the productions of this Presidency, the "Bombay Philosophical Transactions" and the "Journal of the Horticultural Society" take a high place. But Madras, the North-

West, and the Punjab, warn me not to loiter. The "Madras Journal of Literature and Science" is one of the early productions of that which is too inconsiderately called "The Benighted Presidency." Started in 1833, the periodical is still published under the control of the Madras Asiatic Society. If I remember rightly, Madras has produced more independent works than the other Presidencies—in proportion, certainly, to her size; and I may notice a very able writer, Mr. George Norton, the Advocate-General at the Presidency, as having made most valuable contributions to its literature. At the present time the Presidency is very well represented in the newspaper-press. This department, however, as distinguished from general literature, I shall refer to presently. Madras, as regards reviews and magazines, has not been so prolific in point of time as the North-West Provinces of Bengal and the Punjab, which are also in advance, as far as the official records of Government—themselves frequently literary productions of a high order—are concerned. The light literature of the latter has also been of a more vigorous kind. Who among the residents in any part of India during the last fifteen or twenty years—I really forget the date of its production, and have not the publication itself at

hand—does not remember the "Meerut Universal Magazine," familiarly called "M. U. M."? Apart from the local and general knowledge which it contained, it is still regarded as the most brilliant periodical which Anglo-Indian literature has ever given forth. Its career was confined to four volumes; but these were replete with wit, humour, and fancy, conveyed in a tone of savage independence and contemptuous disregard for its contemporaries, caught, perhaps, from the earlier tone of "Blackwood," which were irresistible to its readers. Henry Torrens, Sir Henry Myers Elliott, and Henry Meredith Parker were among the most illustrious of its contributors; and it would be enough for the merits of the magazine to say that they did their best. Torrens's "Ancient Chaldæan Manuscript" (which was included in the "Life and Remains," published in Calcutta by his loving friend James Hume, to whom I have already referred) will live in the recollection of all genuine lovers of satire to whom it may be known. It is, in fact, nothing but a squib upon a member of the Civil Service (the writers in the magazine were mostly of that distinguished body), who was severely reprimanded by Government for driving on the Calcutta "course," the Hyde Park of the Presidency, with a disreput-

able person of the other sex. The lady whose character was so much mistaken turned out to be the Civil Servant's aunt. The fun got out of the adventure by Torrens may, in the language of penny-a-liners, be more easily conceived than described.

The "Benares Magazine," which started after "M. U. M.," had a reputation second only to that bold and brilliant periodical. Among its contributors may be mentioned Fitz-Edward Hall, then of the Educational Department, and afterwards Chief Librarian to the India Office, whom I might have mentioned in connection with more than one periodical named above; the Rev. M. Quartley, the Rev. A. W. Wallace, and the Rev. Julian Robinson; Major Stuart, Governor-General's agent at Benares; George Wyatt of the Civil Service, who was killed at Benares at the outbreak in 1857, author of a celebrated satirical work called "Panch Cowrie Khan; or, Recollections of an Orderly;" and John Walter Sherer, of the same Service, who was one of the chief lights of Indian literature in days past, though he appears now to have abandoned his pen. Mr. Cust, one of the best of the Punjab officials, should also be mentioned as rendering his aid. Contemporary for part of its time with the "Benares Magazine," which endured from 1848 to 1854, we find

"Saunders's Magazine," published at Delhi, and "Ledlie's Miscellany," published at Agra, the first under the editorship of Mr. Paterson Saunders, and the second of Mr. J. W. Sherer, already mentioned. They were both well written, but, perhaps, too much addicted to the technicalities of the Civil Service. Among the contributors to "Ledlie" were Robert Spankie, C.S., a vigorous and otherwise admirable writer; Fitz-Edward Hall, whose connection with the "Benares" I have already noticed; and Frederick Shaw, C.S., who, unhappily, died an early death. Both publications were stopped in 1854, after numbering several volumes.

After these speculations, which were suspended for the most part because the contributors tired of their work, I know of no production of the kind in the North-West. In the Punjab some creditable private works have been published, but the best are those included among the records of Government, and given forth from time to time in that form.

The reason why, in the present day, local publications have declined, is easily accounted for. Men in India—especially in the Service—have less leisure on account of the greater demands made upon them by an altered system; and because, whatever be their confinement in the hot weather, they have so

many more means of relaxation through the increased connection with Europe, which has put an end to the old hearty colonial feeling, found them an immensity of books to read, and loosened the bonds which endeared them to the country. In India, Englishmen are now only visitors, striving to keep their health when in it, and seeking the first opportunity to get out of it with the money they have saved. What they do for literature they now principally publish at home, as may be observed by all readers of current publications, who can scarcely fail to notice that numbers of works continually issued by London publishers—scientific works, sporting works, and occasionally novels—must have come from Indian hands. The change may be better or worse; but it is worth noting, if only as refuting the assertion sometimes made that Anglo-Indians in the present day are less cultivated and less practically appreciative of literature than their predecessors.

Journalism is another branch of the subject.

What a wretched thing it used to look—an Indian newspaper! Beside its clean, crisp English brothers in the mail-bag, it seemed decidedly poor, and perhaps not honest—conveying the impression that it must have been produced by stealth. It usually

bore some wild name, which one would think distressing even in a dictionary. In its principal columns, the opening paragraph was usually an apology. The editor was sorry to say that delay had been caused by an accident in the printing-office, and he must further apologize to his numerous subscribers for the uncorrected state in which he had been obliged to go to press. Or he had not himself been able to produce any "editorials" (a hateful word, but in constant use in the colonies and America), owing to circumstances over which he had no control; but would make up for all shortcomings next number, &c. Not many years ago, a journal was started "up country," on the Bengal side, with scarcely anything but apologies. The projector—who was also to be the editor and chief penman—apologized, first for his type, which, he said, was worn and insufficient; then for the paper, which was thin, and never meant to be printed upon; then for his press, which, he was afraid, would not always work, and expressed fears about his "hands," who shared the same weakness. One great difficulty which he had to experience, was in getting news, partly because there was very little to get, and partly because he had not influence to obtain what there was. His most profuse apology,

however, was made for himself. He did not profess to be an English *littérateur*, or to "do" any good original writing; but he assured his readers that he had local experience, and that his principles were thoroughly sound and honest.

Journals have really taken root in the Mofussil with as small beginnings as these, and even in their prosperity they usually keep up their character by despising the London *littérateur* who occasionally goes out to conduct pretentious rivals, the local incapables being considered somehow all the more genuine on account of their incapacity, by their peculiar patrons. As a general rule, such papers have been edited by ambitious clerks in public offices; private soldiers of a better class than the ordinary rank and file, who had bought their discharge; and officers who, having contrived to get cashiered, were, of course, quite competent to lead public opinion upon the most important questions of the day.

Such as these had, I need scarcely say, nothing in common with the men who, like Mr. James Silk Buckingham, were the lights in the dark ages of Indian journalism—men who did not set up journals merely because they wanted journals, but because they were bent upon maintaining certain principles

through their medium. Men who not only made themselves heard, but insisted upon being listened to; and who, through good report and evil report, held to their purpose, until Lord William Bentinck set the Press free.

It was after that enfranchisement the minor men to whom I allude took to grinding their own little organs; and in the Provinces they are not without their representatives in the present day. In the Presidencies, old-established journals, with capital, credit, and talent to back them, have large circulations, and make large returns to their proprietors; and in the principal stations of the North-West there are also thoroughly efficient papers, which are unrivalled as regards news, and occasionally put forth authoritative articles upon local affairs. In Calcutta, the "Englishman" and the "Bengal Hurkaru" are at the head of the daily press; and there is generally a third aspirant for the same honours, whose existence is seldom very prolonged. Of late years the "Morning Chronicle" and the "Phœnix" have both come and gone; and now we find the "Daily News" taking their place, with, I fancy, doubtful prospects of success. The "Englishman" has always been foremost in maintaining the rights of the settler or colonization party, in opposition to

the Civil Service, which, in its own interests and those of the defunct East India Company, maintained the close system, under which newspapers, even after their independence became possible, were naturally out of place. The "Hurkaru," which in former days was an advocate of the close system, having widened its sympathies of late years, and in fact at times gone beyond the "Englishman" in plain speaking on the same side, left, of course, an opening for the third competitor, who is usually found faithfully in the field. The "Daily News," like the "Phœnix," is moderate, and even more submissive to the powers that be, carrying acquiescence to the extent even of defending the late Indian Secretary, whose policy was so curiously adapted not to please any party in the country. Among the Calcutta papers the "Hindoo Patriot" should not be forgotten. It is an advocate of native rights, conducted by natives, but in the English tongue. It is characteristically written—that is to say, it exhibits a great deal of cleverness, and about an equal amount of spite.

In Madras, daily papers are of more recent date. For many years the "Athenæum," the "Spectator," and the "Examiner" contented themselves with publishing two or three times a week. But

after the new *régime* inaugurated in that memorable October of 1858—when every non-official Englishman thought that he must do something more than he had ever done before, or perish in the attempt—the "Athenæum" became a daily, buying up the "Spectator," and subsequently incorporating two successive oppositions—the "Statesman" and the "Daily News"—the title of the latter being retained as a subordinate heading. The "Madras Times," however, another venture of the last few years, has maintained, at any rate, an existence. It appeals more to the Church and missionary party than the "Athenæum," and, though in the present day of marked moderation in its tone, is thoroughly secular, and on the progress and movement side.

Bombay began early with dailies. For some years before the new *régime* she had the "Bombay Times," the "Bombay Gazette," and the "Telegraph and Courier." The "Times" was moderate, except as regarded a few obnoxious persons, and might be considered Conservative until the outbreak of 1857, when it changed its course, and became merged in the "Bombay Standard," a progress paper, like the "Gazette," but which did not somehow succeed. As for the "Telegraph and

Courier," it was generally in opposition to everything, but principally devoted itself to military matters, and, until its final disappearance, was the especial organ of oppressed officers and minor officials who were bent upon bearding Head-Quarters. At present, the daily journals of Bombay are the "Gazette," which has always kept its ground, and the "Times of India," which was founded a few years ago upon the ruins of the "Times" and "Standard," which could not get on either separate or together. The "Times of India" is, as a general rule, opposed to what may be called popular ideas, as far as our own countrymen are concerned. It has, indeed, the reputation of being the organ of the natives, the Parsees more especially, and too frequently justifies the charge by maintaining the separation of interests which it would be more politic to seek to unite. On the settler and colonization side, Bombay has also a weekly journal called the "Saturday Review," which has been of various merit during its career, but, in emulation of its original, generally assumes a superior air, is free in sarcasm, and slashing at times—at the wrong times, occasionally, as well as the right.

The provincial papers are a class by themselves. Foremost among these is the "Delhi

Gazette," and, as far as antiquity is concerned, the "Lahore Chronicle." Established at a later date, the "Mofussilite" was at one time more conspicuous than either, but it does not seem to be a great success at present. Of late years, a couple of journals have been set up at Lucknow, but neither the "Oudh Gazette" nor the "Oudh Mail" gained either reputation or success, though the former, with a certain party support, still carries on what may be possibly a remunerative existence. At Allahabad several journals have been started since the station took the place of Agra as the capital of the North-West. The "New Times" had excellent promise, having the co-operation of some of the best writers in the Provinces; but as these were, for the most part, military officers, magistrates, and judges, it got the reputation—undeservedly, I believe—of inclining too much to Service interests. It ultimately collapsed through the impossibility of reconciling the provisions of the Limited Liability Act with proper business control, under the anomalous state of the law then prevalent in the Mofussil. It has been succeeded of late by the "Pioneer," which also aspires to be a first-class paper, and seems to have both talent and capital at its back.

Lower down country there has been no local journal since the demise of the "Benares Recorder," until, close to Calcutta, we come to Serampore. There, the "Friend of India" still flourishes, and, with certain appreciated faults, not originating with its present conductors, maintains an ascendancy, not for news—which it cares nothing for, being published only once a week—but for accurate information, partly original, and partly gained from a systematic attention to public records, which the majority of journalists in India most unwisely neglect. The "Friend" has always been edited by thoroughly competent persons, is written with care and sometimes with power, and seldom fails to carry the weight which comes from trustworthiness and authority.

Looking, then, at only the leading journals of India, it is clear that the country is in no want of a Newspaper-Press. How far that press may be considered to represent its readers, in respect to character, ability, and general efficiency, is another question. Most certainly, the papers we have named do not labour under the disability of the forlorn speculation referred to in the course of these remarks. Those published in the Presidency towns, and, indeed, several belonging to

the Provinces, spare no expense to obtain the best and earliest intelligence. They have London correspondents and they have Paris correspondents; they have correspondents elsewhere on the Continent, as well as, in several instances, at Malta and Alexandria; from distant parts of Asia they have letters written by local agents. They make continual use of the telegraph, and, in fact, comply with every demand of the kind made by their subscribers. They engage the best writers they can find to go out from England as editors, and pay them salaries fully proportioned to local prices —indeed, far more than proportioned in many cases. Nevertheless, you will as often as not be told in India that the Press is deficient, not only in tone, but in ability, and in most of the more important requirements of journalism. To what extent these complaints are justified is worthy of consideration.

There are two principal reasons why Indian journalism does not rank as it deserves. It is subject to both general and particular disadvantages; the one being common to every part of the British Empire which does not happen to be London, the other arising from special conditions of its own.

Let a provincial or colonial journal be written with twice the ability of the "Times," it will not command the influence of the least pretentious of its London rivals. Upon purely local topics it will be heard; but it will never become authority upon Imperial matters. "Our talented fellow-townsman," who is recognized by nine-tenths of his readers as the "we" of the "Stoke Pogis Independent," may be considered a whale at demolishing the Town Council; but his constituency, who have known or heard of him all his life, cannot conceive that he has a much better acquaintance with things in general than themselves. So when he answers the "Saturday Review" upon a Parliamentary question, they give him only that kind of encouragement which they would accord to a very small boy fighting a big one. They are a little proud, perhaps, of his pluck, but the possibility of his winning is not to be thought of. And even this degree of toleration is withheld when he ventures upon foreign politics. Colonialism is, of course, much the same as provincialism, as far as the Press is concerned; and even the "editor from London," who goes out to Australia or India to conduct the "Bendigo Gully Universal Intelligencer," or the "Mozuffurnugger Pukka Gudha," soon loses caste when it is found

that he is not so very different from the local people; and in the course of time he naturally becomes a "local" himself. In no case is there any chance of the readers taking *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, as they do in reference to the London papers, where they have heard of articles being written by actual Members of Parliament and designate Secretaries of State.

Such are the general conditions of what may, for the sake of convenience, be called extra-metropolitan journalism. In India, as we have said, there are special circumstances which complicate their action, arising partly from the country itself, and partly from our peculiar position therein, and the exceptional state of society to which it has given rise. In Australia, or indeed in most of our colonies proper, the journalist need concern himself with little beyond the affairs of his own countrymen. But in India, where the natives outnumber us by an enormous majority, and we profess to govern for their especial benefit, a host of questions arise, in which not only Imperial policy, but serious social considerations, are involved. India, in fact, has to be learned, and experience as well as reading is necessary for the process. There is no English public, in the proper sense of the term, in India, or,

at least, but a very small contribution towards one. Until the last few years, the European residents consisted almost exclusively of the civil and military servants of the Company and the "Queen's" regiments quartered in the country. There were merchants, planters, shopkeepers; but they formed only a small item, and even now they have no more the position of a "public" than the passengers on board one of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers, who possess the freeborn British privilege of making themselves disagreeable; but, however they may grumble at their dinners, have no power over the captain in the conduct of the ship. And not only are the topics to be treated of a difficult character, but there is very little machinery by which they may be made familiar. Selected records of Government are published at intervals; acts of the Legislative Council find a place in the "Gazette;" but a great deal of what is going on in the public departments is never known in India until it finds its way out of the Blue Books published at home. So the natural consequence follows—that the Press occupies itself, to a far greater extent than either in England or the colonies proper, with such service topics as are suggested by the published orders of Government, or matters of a more or less personal

character, calculated to amuse rather than to instruct, and of which the treatment too frequently "makes the judicious grieve," and the injudicious retaliate.

In a state of society where the majority are well-bred and well-educated, and the thoroughly "lower orders" of England are scarcely represented at all, it is evident that the principal readers of newspapers will be of a critical turn; and considering that nearly everybody has time to spare, it may be supposed that a far greater number will employ themselves with their pens than would take to the pursuit in this country. Such is the state of the case in India, where the Press is flooded by a host of amateur authors, many of whom seem to think that an editor takes a great liberty if he writes his own articles; and compete, with an enthusiasm worthy of a better cause, to supply his place. People of all classes, more or less, share the common failing. We never heard of a Governor-General or a Commander-in-Chief plying the local papers in person; but indirectly, through their secretaries and staff, a great deal has been done in this way, even from such elevated sources. And many high officials cultivate such connections with considerable care—the present Governor-General, for instance, his brother, Sir

Henry Lawrence, and Sir James Outram, having been frequent contributors to the Press. In conspicuous positions in India there are also many excellent writers who never fail to employ their talents in this manner. I here allude to civilians. As to military men, the difficulty in the case of a popular paper is to keep them off. If they do nothing else for the local journals, they write letters of news; and general intelligence, it must be remembered, can be obtained only in this way. The homely "liner," who picks up so much in this country, is in India unknown, and his place is supplied by volunteer correspondents, who, in making their letters interesting to themselves, almost inevitably fall into "shop" and personalities. There can be no objection to a little of either in the best-regulated journal; but the tendency is, of course, apt to develop to excess; and now and then, when the office of correspondent gets into bad hands, a great deal of scandal is the consequence.

For the most part, however, the gossip which appears is of a harmless kind. But writing of this sort often leads to quarrels; and where men of really amiable temperament take a sporting view of the mission of the Press, it is no wonder if ill-natured persons, when wielding their pens,

sometimes pass the bounds of fairness and moderation. And for this failing, Indian Journalism has obtained a bad name. Not that its attacks are uniformly conceived in a bitter spirit, being as often as not dictated by the sporting propensity alluded to; and this kind of enjoyment is felt by readers as well as writers. Thus, a few years ago, at Benares, a shopkeeper, with whom I had entered into conversation concerning the local Press, discoursed in this style about what he called the "palmy days" of one of the local journals: "Ah, Sir, those were times, indeed, when Mr. ——— was editing the paper. *There was always somebody being abused.*" It is fair, however, to add that this attraction has well nigh disappeared in the present day. There are a few miserable prints here and there—conducted by uneducated persons—who, in the general cause of what they call reform, consider it their duty to harass the local judge or commissioner; but they are scarcely read by persons of any importance, and have never very long lives. Still, the character which these publications obtain, has a mischievous effect upon the Press generally; and there are not wanting—even in these days—men in official positions who consider it simply as a nuisance.

Another reason for this feeling is, the governing classes are thrown so much among the governed, that it is difficult for writers taking an unfavourable view of their proceedings, to avoid giving personal offence; and however dispassionate may be the criticism, people are apt to chafe under it, when they know that it is written by the man living next door to them, and whom they are obliged to treat with official, and perhaps social, courtesy. The rivalry, too, between public men who "work the Press" one against the other, is occasionally a cause of newspaper controversy. As has been said, however, there is very little reproach of the kind to be attached in these days to journalism in India, where the principal organs of opinion are conducted with as much dignity and decorum as the best class of papers at home. We are, indeed, principally reminded of the old character of the Press by the praise sometimes bestowed by one journal upon another for a "temperate" expression of its views — praise which should be as unnecessary as a statement which once appeared at the end of a report of a public meeting for the promotion of missionary enterprize: "The assembly then peaceably dispersed."

There is one fact which has doubtless had a

beneficial influence in raising the character of the Press. Well-conducted journals "pay," and become large properties, while badly-conducted journals have but a hand-to-mouth existence, and most frequently ruin their proprietors. So it is clear that the Indian community, whatever may have been said to the contrary, have a preference for respectability in Journalism as in other things.

XI.

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA.

CHRISTMAS in India may be made more or less like Christmas in England, according to the part of the country in which it is spent, and the conditions under which you spend it. In the Presidency towns—Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay—you will find all appliances and means to make it as merry as you please; the main drawback to most people being the heat of the weather and the absence of the old familiar faces which give the true character to the season at home. In Calcutta, for instance, the great event of the holidays will be celebrated much in the same manner year after year. Here is a fair picture of an average Christmas dinner:—The party is not a large one, as people are very apt to be "out of town" at this time of the year, tempted by the cold weather, which is now at its height. There are not many

signs of cold, you will say, in the appearance of the company. The punkah suspended from the ceiling is being pulled with evident good-will, in order to stir the air; and one gentleman, advancing towards middle age and rotundity, has also a hand-punkah, which is waved over him by his servant, whom he implores to be more active. The younger gentleman opposite is wiping his forehead with an unmistakable sense of the oppressiveness of the atmosphere, and only one of the party—a pleasant-looking man, who, however, I suspect, is fond of bestowing as much as possible of his good nature upon himself—seems to pay much attention to the dinner. The lovely and accomplished hostess is intent upon the business of the table, but it is in another way. She is giving directions to the tall Khitmutgar who is bringing in the eventful pudding, and whose respectful dignity shows him worthy of the honourable dignity reposed in him. The lady—apparently unmarried—at the other end of the table, has plainly no cares of the kind. She looks as languid as the before-mentioned gentleman engaged upon his brow—perhaps from sympathy.

As each guest is supposed to bring his own attendant to a dinner-party, and different guests

may come from different parts of the country, a mingling of classes among the servants may frequently be seen in a place like Calcutta, which is the most important of the Presidencies, and the seat of the Supreme Government. The tall man bearing the pudding is a Calcutta man—a Mohammedan, of course, as the Hindoos of Bengal, though they will occasionally deviate into drinking our wine and even eating such an abomination as our ham, decline most positively to serve us at our tables. Behind him, bearing the two bottles of champagne which he has just taken out of the ice, is his little boy, who is being bred up to the parental profession, and looks as Mohammedan little boys are very apt to do, preternaturally sharp for his years. He has been born probably in the service of his lady-mistress, and will be well provided for by her one of these days, perhaps sent to a native school and educated for a higher sphere of life. The old man who bears the wine sauce with such a profound sense of responsibility cannot be a Mohammedan, or he would most assuredly wear a beard at his age. I take him to be a Bombay Hindoo of an accommodating caste, like the Madras man opposite. In both Bombay and Madras the restrictions of caste do not nearly

so much interfere with domestic service as in Bengal.

The dinner has been a good one, you may depend upon it. Good dinners are by no means rare in Calcutta, and the only objection to them is that they are too much alike. During a great part of the year you are tolerably sure to get an excellent turkey at any dinner-party; so it may be certainly expected there on Christmas Day. The ham comes out from England overland, and is, of course, as good as any that can be got in this country. It is a standard dish all the year round; and so is the saddle of mutton, than which there is no mutton finer on the face of the earth. Salmon brought out in hermetically-sealed tins from England, may also be considered a matter of course. It is by no means so good as when fresh, but is palatable enough, and is generally preferred to the fish caught in the Hoogley, against which many persons hold a strong prejudice, and not without reason, as far as many kinds are concerned. The most delicious fish of all, which, however, does not come into season until the spring, is, fortunately, unimpeachable in its habits, and altogether above suspicion. This is the *topsee mutchlee*, or mango fish, one of the most deli-

cately-flavoured inhabitants of the waters known. It is as great an object of interest while it lasts, on the banks of the Hoogley, as whitebait is on the banks of the Thames. But this is a digression. Besides the principal dishes above named, the Christmas dinner in Calcutta will comprise roast beef, of course, besides curry and pilau—the former of two kinds, prawn and fowl, and the latter of fowl, as a matter of necessity. The usual *entrées*, such as are seen on English tables, will also be forthcoming; and, at this season of the year, there will be game in abundance, including profuse pyramids of ortolans and quails. I must warn the European reader, who may expect too much, that unless a strict supervision be exercised over the cook, the pudding will prove a failure (I have seen it come up in a liquid form, like soup, so that there was no approaching it except with a spoon); but, as far as confectionery generally is concerned, the native artist will not be found much behind his British brother, while in the way of dessert, Calcutta has a decided advantage over our colder clime.

As regards wines, our Christmas party is not likely to have any great variety. There will be several kinds on the table probably, but the chances are, that with the exception of a glass of sherry or

Madeira taken after the soup, the principal consumption will be in "Simpkin," as the natives call champagne, on account, it is said, of a great importer in days gone by, named Simpson, but more probably through a corruption of the name of the wine itself. Pale ale has now nearly disappeared from dinner-parties in Calcutta, and wise men in the East begin to see the expediency of not "mixing" even to the same extent as in England. The champagne is, therefore, kept going during the whole of the sitting, and is taken by many persons with the dessert as well as with the dinner—in which latter capacity it is naturally more in place. But then it must be remembered that few stay long after the ladies, the potations being soon brought to a close, as a general rule. The Christmas Day, I am sorry to say, is likely to wind up very much like any other day. The guests will talk about home, and sentimentalize a little about separation from home ties; but they will not attempt to enact any substitute for the Christmas games, which, even in England, one hears of rather than sees during the great festival, unless it be in the depths of the country. Indeed, the absence of the younger members of the family, who are tolerably sure to be at home for the benefit of their health and education, deprives the elders of

the general inducement to any extra exertion. Men and women are seldom inclined to make children of themselves, even at Christmas, unless they have children to bear them company. The party will break up most likely not much later than eleven, and the guests will, for the most part, retire to rest. The gentleman who is wiping his brow with his handkerchief will, perhaps, mount his dog-cart, which is waiting outside, and drive over to the fort "to see how they are getting on at the mess"—an unnecessary subject of anxiety, as they are sure to be getting on very well—and he, it may be, will do a cheroot or so and a glass of soda-water and brandy (called in India a "peg") before going to his quarters. He may possibly also have a game at billiards; but no greater extent of dissipation is to be anticipated, very late hours being unusual in India, except in the case of balls, upon which occasions, though some may choose to be virtuous, the majority seldom manage to conclude their cakes and ale until "gun-fire" in the morning.

"Up the country," Christmas is not much more like Christmas at home than it is in Calcutta; but greater justice is generally done to the season, owing to the more favourable conditions enjoyed in the Mofussil—foremost among which is the superior

climate. In Calcutta, Christmas occurs in what is called the "cold weather," but the cold is apt to be of a very doubtful character, and although the atmosphere may possibly be so damp as to render a fire in the grate endurable if not desirable, the chances are that it will be warm enough to render the action of the punkah in a crowded room an agreeable relief. But in the Mofussil there is scarcely such a thing as a punkah to be seen between the end of September and the end of March, and the cold weather is an appreciable reality. The winter in India is the season of all others not only most enjoyable to the sensation, but most delightful to the eye. It is in the winter that the leaves and flowers are out in their fullest luxuriance, and that all the bright birds and butterflies, which seem to have been hiding themselves during the hot season, fill the air with life. It is in the winter that the sky is most blue and the earth most green, that any amount of exercise may be freely indulged in, that the Anglo-Indian feels the blood once more dancing in his veins, and himself ready for any feat of activity and enterprize which will enable him to work off some of his superfluous energy. You may fancy, then, that Christmas comes in more fascinating guise to the Mofussilites than to the Metropolitans—not, however, that much

more is done upon the day, the difference being, that what people do, they do with more enjoyment.

"The probable events of the day are not many or very varied. Unless you are very lazy, or have been anticipating the festivities of the season to any outrageous extent the night before, you will order yourself to be called at dawn. You make a hasty toilette, confined to some slight ablutions and the donning of your easiest clothes. Your room probably opens on the verandah, where the keen morning air seems bringing the garden to life. The gardener and his assistants are already busy among the broad-leaved trees, gathering fruit and flowers, and, by means of a couple of oxen, drawing up water from the well, from which it is conducted, by artificial channels, to the sunken beds between the narrow walks, the whole garden being irrigated by this process. Your horse is waiting for you in front of the verandah, sniffing the morning air with an impatience *not* partaken of by the groom, who hates the cold weather, and stands shivering with a rug round him, which most probably belongs to another steed in the stable. You have the alternative of a ride or taking a constitutional walk on foot, which latter

exercise many men prefer in the cold weather. On this particular morning you elect to ride, let us say, as you wish to make some calls. A preliminary gallop soon sets you up for society, and then you turn into the grounds of your early coffee club—held, perhaps, at a mess-house, or it may be on premises of its own. Here you find tables spread in the verandah, and servants already busy in dispensing mocha or bohea to energetic men, who must have got up in the middle of the night to arrive before you. You light a cheroot and are soon supplied with a cup of one of those precious drinks, which are nowhere more precious than in India. If some men have been before you, a great many come after. Striding in on foot, cantering in on horses and tattoos, spinning in on carts and buggies, the owners of familiar faces come thick and threefold. The post comes next, with the newspapers, and conversation then sets in. Politics are discussed in eager haste, European questions being settled with a want of ceremony which would startle not a little some of the austere statesmen of St. Stephen's. The proceedings of the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief are then canvassed in every variety of criticism, the general tone of which may,

perhaps, be summed up as most resembling a good-natured growl. A dash of station scandal is added, perhaps, by way of a zest, and some comparison of notes as to how everybody is engaged for the day. At about eight o'clock the party disperse, and you return home, calling in on your way, probably, upon a family of your acquaintance with whom you are intimate, and whom you see taking their *chota hazree*, or little breakfast, in their verandah or under the trees in their garden. Arrived home, you may possibly find a friend who has called in your absence, and who is taking tea in *your* verandah. In any case, you are soon in your room again; and then, after a bath (unless you have had a swim at the coffee-club, which may contain the necessary accommodation), you dress yourself for the last time till dinner, and are ready for breakfast and polite society. Ladies, I may here observe, do not *ride* out on Sundays in India, for the same reason, I suppose, that they do not ride out on Sundays at home; nor would any *équestriennes* be seen probably on Christmas Day, though they will not generally object to take a drive.

Breakfast despatched—breakfast is very much like a dinner in the Upper Provinces of India,

and some reprehensible men go so far as take beer with it—church is the next duty. Here the "parish" is duly represented, and all classes of people, who never meet on less important occasions, are at liberty to know one another by sight. Here the Eurasian (half-coloured) gentlemen and ladies look so clean and nicely dressed, that it is quite a pleasure to see them; and a great many of these, and the members of the small commercial class, get some of the best seats in the place, their conventional "betters" being content to put up with whatever quarters it may be convenient to afford them. Here at least one regiment of European soldiers form part of the congregation, of which they and their officers, and the other military gentlemen belonging to the station, form a conspicuous part. Here the younger officers, as in garrison towns at home, stare with great affability at the tradesmen's daughters, with whom they have been known to make imprudent matches, as in garrison towns at home also. Here, in short, are represented most of the usual elements of English society, with a little in addition. The Lieutenant-Governor, for instance, if the place be a seat of Government, gives a great air of dignity to the congregation. A couple of Aides-de-Camp,

in scrupulous uniform, are in attendance upon him and his lady; and the one who mainly devotes himself to the lady, does so in a manner which is charming to see. The cares of Staff have not furrowed his gentlemanlike brow, which is shadowed only by his neatly-braided hair. He makes more noise with his sword and his spurs as he passes up the aisle, than any three other officers put together; and the manner in which he inducts his fair charge into the pew, disposes of her parasol, and finds out the proper place in the Prayer-book, is more than enough to excite the admiration of the congregation and keep it active until service begins. Once released from attendance and in his own rooms, in Government House or elsewhere, our Aide is one of the pleasantest and least affected fellows going; his manner of performing what he considers his duty, is only his little way.

But all these particulars are applicable to the church on Sundays. I know of no difference on Christmas Day, unless the interior be decorated with evergreens, which it may or may not be, according to the taste or attention of the minister or his clerk.

Returning from church, you will find that your servants have not forgotten the day, albeit it is

not a sacred one to them. They have employed their time during your absence in hanging festoons of flowers from the gateposts and between the columns of the verandah; and evergreens are everywhere in the drawing-room and dining-room —over the mantel-piece, on the wall-shades, where the candles are placed for night, and round the hanging candelabra in the centre of either apartment. In the verandah, too, are placed rows of flat baskets, called *dalis*, filled with choice flowers, fruit, and vegetables, which are brought with many *salaams* to the members of the family, who may take an offering therefrom, or merely touch the gift in token of acceptance, as the case may be. The baskets are then restored to their places, and some of their contents may possibly appear on the table at dinner. One part of the ceremony, however, is never omitted—a direction to your Bearer or Khansamah, who has the keeping of your loose cash, to distribute a slight *baksheesh*, or largesse, among the disinterested donors. It is very likely your own property that they have so generously bestowed upon you, but the custom is a graceful one, and need not be looked upon from too critical a point of view.

After church, intimate friends will be found

calling upon one another, much as intimate friends will do elsewhere; and I am not aware that anything particularly appropriate to Christmas is done upon such occasions, or that one is reminded of the season in any forcible way, until dinner-time, when, if a pleasant party be got together, the North-West asserts itself over Calcutta, and as much festivity is indulged in as can be got out of the materials.

The dinner is not likely to vary much from that of Calcutta, except that your Khansamah will insist upon making you a cake calculated to last all through the holidays, and laying in spiced beef and corned humps (from the Brahminee ox, such as are exhibited at the Zoological Gardens in London, and eaten remorselessly when we get to India) enough to hold out till Easter at least. But the party is tolerably sure to be a merry one; and I have seen such pastimes as blind-man's buff and forfeits attempted after dinner, not without success. But then there were children in the house, which happens in the North-West much more frequently than in Calcutta, the climate of the Provinces being far less unfavourable to the tender European plant.

There is one accessory to Christmas which I

have never seen in India, for the reason that it does not grow in that country—I mean mistletoe. But I can assure you that very pleasant Christmas parties have been passed without it. And why not? For, although the mistletoe is a means to an end, is it not possible to gain the end without the means? One of my pleasantest Christmases in India was my first, passed at Lucknow among the officials of the Residency and a party of members of that unhappy garrison, which little more than three years afterwards were enduring all the horrors of a siege. On the two following years I spent the festival at Agra, with a banker one year and a bishop the next; then came my Christmas in Calcutta, at the house of a merchant. The succeeding year I dined at the mess of a cavalry regiment at Allahabad. My next Christmas was also passed at Allahabad, but at a private house; and the next after that at some little distance off—in Lancashire. I mention these not very important particulars in order to indicate my acquaintance with more modes than one of spending Christmas in India. All of the occasions referred to were highly festive; but the least characteristic of the season was that passed at the mess—it was a capital specimen of a

"guest-night," and that was all. It would be too much to expect anything like a family party at such a place. The men in barracks, however, were more successful, in their own way, than the officers. They were all keeping it up with great glee, apparently; and at some of their quarters, to which a party of us were taken in the course of the evening by the officers in command, there was evidently no lack of enjoyment. The interior was decorated in a wonderfully effective manner, considering the simple materials employed—lights, flowers, flags, and bayonets, with evergreens to fill up all the intermediate spaces. Here there was dancing to any extent; singing, comic and serious; the dancers showing immense activity with their feet, and the singers standing on the tables, and taking care that they should be heard if not appreciated. The entertainments were varied at intervals by refreshments, consisting of hot punch and mulled beer, which, much as they were enjoyed, did not seem to have any objectionable effect upon the harmony or propriety of the proceedings. Both concoctions were exceedingly good, but were not quite the thing after champagne, and those of our party who did more than taste them, suffered for their imprudence next morning. This

consideration it would have been madness to neglect; so, after the officer in command had danced with the Sergeant-Major's wife, a very nice-looking person,—as, indeed, were most of the barrack ladies present,—and we had heard nearly as much singing as we cared about, we all returned to the mess. There we were safe, of course, knowing that whatever headaches we might have next morning, they would be brought about by legitimate means.

I am afraid there are many of our countrymen in India who do not pass Christmas quite so pleasantly sometimes as those among whom I have fallen. Those stationed in lonely places, where scarcely a white face is to be seen but their own; travellers on the road; wanderers of every kind scattered about the country, must feel a terrible sense of desolation when they contrast their uncared-for condition with the bright scenes they remember at home, in which they played principal parts: the dutiful son, the affectionate brother, the happy lover — perhaps all these combined. Let us hope that this year, at any rate, fortune has favoured them, and that they are enjoying as happy a Christmas as India can afford. Truly, they have not the least claim upon our sympathy among "all travellers by land and sea."

XII.

THE SEASONS IN CALCUTTA.

We—the English in India—do not call the seasons in that country by their seasonable names. We recognize but three, in fact: the hot weather, the cold weather, and the rains. The latter, beginning in June in most parts of the Peninsula, occupy a considerable portion of the summer months; so that the dry summer sets in sooner than in Western latitudes, and may be considered to commence with the end of March. Then it is that the mango-fish and the fruit from which it derives its name are in full perfection, and nearly every other production begins to deteriorate. Then it is, more especially, that the new importations of our countrymen and countrywomen, who have judiciously timed their departure from England so as to arrive at Calcutta in the cold weather, and who have hitherto treated the heat with scornful indifference, begin to acknow-

ledge that even fresh constitutions from Europe are not proof against the inconveniences of the climate, and are as abased and cast down as the "old Indians" upon whom they have been bestowing their ridicule. They have probably but very few months since sailed from England, and have "done" the Overland Route in a spirit of ostentatious patronage, with which their present condition but ill assorts. They may have been more or less indisposed in the Bay of Biscay or between Marseilles and Alexandria; but, after that, they have made light of the sun of Egypt; have condemned Suez principally for being dull; have refused to admit that the Red Sea was much hotter than an Eastern sea ought to be; have taken kindly to the moist beauties of Ceylon, and actually fallen in love with the Bay of Bengal for being so smooth as to allow dancing upon deck. Adorned in their lightest drapery—drawn forth upon the two days in the week when access is permitted from their luggage in the hold—they have bade the climate do its worst. Thus far, they have found it a delightful inducement to wear all their fairy finery from the first thing in the morning; and they have been assured by the little glasses in their cabins, and the large glasses in the saloon, that the principal effect of the heat, thus far, has been to

give a delicacy to their still fresh complexions far from unbecoming, and *so* different from the positive coarseness produced by the sharp atmosphere of that dreadful Europe.

A day's sojourn at Madras has done a little towards disillusionising them; but, after all, they have come to the conclusion that the climate of the Carnatic is so tempered by water ices, pink or yellow, according to choice, as to be not much worse than that of the British ball-room; so even at this trying stage they have been consoled. And the jewellery, moreover, which the natives bring on board for such passengers as do not seek it on shore, is a source of excitement equal to several downward degrees of the thermometer. No: they have not yet admitted that India is hot, and when, after three days more of shipboard, they cast anchor at Calcutta, they have pronounced the place rather cold than otherwise; and colder than Madras it most certainly is. A very short time at Calcutta, where every day at this season sends the glass higher, removes the impression. But now they have a fresh defence against despair—they like the heat. Nothing could possibly make a place so pleasant as the reception that new comers—of the interesting sex, of course—receive in Calcutta. Everybody is so glad to see them; they

have so many people calling upon them; they are asked to so many tiffin parties, dinner parties, and even balls, which are not yet abandoned for the season. Indeed, the popular idea in India appears to be that, being already so hot, you cannot make yourself much hotter whatever you do; so people give themselves the benefit of whatever doubt exists on the subject, and dance as nearly all the year round as may be. Men, too, are so plentiful—as they always are where the military class are much represented—and have no stupid duties to perform in the middle of the day, so that festivities never flag on *their* account, as they sometimes do in England.

But when summer really sets in, the new arrivals, though still enjoying themselves amazingly, are obliged to make one admission—that they cannot disport themselves with quite the same impunity in Calcutta as they could in London. They will not confess the fact out of doors, perhaps, lest they should be classed with the "old Indians;" but they "give way" dreadfully during the disengaged parts of the day, and lose their dignity sadly, as we see from an engraving in an illustrated journal which has suggested these remarks, wherein several young ladies—understood to be new arrivals in Calcutta—are depicted as lying in various attitudes of anguish

about their dressing-room—on sofas, chairs, or the floor, according to chance.

Our readers of the sterner sex must not suppose that this is a sort of scene which they would be likely to behold in Calcutta—the confidence is one which could have been induced only by a lady artist. Even the husband, or brother, or whatever he may be, who is waiting in the verandah, would not presume to intrude; for in India a great many apartments are left open from the verandahs for the sake of air, which, being understood as private, are strictly considered in that light. Therefore it is that the ladies whom the artist permits us to look upon in their unguarded moments have no notion of shutting themselves up in the solemn European manner. They have been out visiting, perhaps, the greater part of the afternoon, or have themselves received visitors at tiffin; and they are now recovering themselves, with the assurance that they will not be interfered with. Any caller at such an hour —five o'clock, or thereabouts—would most assuredly find the *durwaza bund—i.e.* the gate, shut, the polite description of "not at home"—and it is too early for the regular demands of society. A lounge preparatory to the toilette, before the evening drive or ride, which is to be succeeded by another toilette

for the inevitable dinner, thus becomes a luxury of luxuries that you must have been in Bengal to appreciate. Perhaps "lounge" is a mild word to describe the strenuous inactivity of our interesting friends; but it is not for us, in this our colder clime, to cavil at appearances which in the East are the most natural in the world.

Those are pleasant moments, but, unfortunately, cannot last long. It is obvious that the ladies cannot appear in the gay world with those abridged costumes and in so abandoned a state of hair. We will give them a quarter of an hour, say, and after that they will surrender themselves to their respective attendants, emerging soon, in irreproachable toilette, for the repose of the carriage or the activity of the saddle, in such a state of resplendent happiness as to make any number of conquests a matter of course.

There is no such popular subject of conversation in India—among Anglo-Indians at least—as the ignorance of "people at home" concerning the country. Not, however, that the Anglo-Indians have a right to take it for granted that everybody who "goes out" knows all about India, and that everybody who stays at home knows nothing about it. Such things have happened as men and women being taken to Southampton in a British railway-

train; embarking there in a British steamer; living while on board on British food, qualified by British beer and wines, which have become British by adoption; touching, on the way out, at British dependencies, and taking in British coals; and, during their residence in India, eating, drinking, thinking, talking, listening to nothing that was not British as British can be. Such persons pick up a great deal about the usages of their countrymen in a hot climate; are competent judges of curry, and indisputable authorities upon beer and champagne in their relation to tropical influences. But they need learn next to nothing of the country in which they sojourn, and may easily come home as ignorant upon the subject as they went out. But it is not to be supposed that the majority of our countrymen in India aspire to or incur this benighted condition; and there is really a great deal of justice in the strictures commonly passed upon the comparative ignorance of "people at home."

One of the popular delusions which we steadily entertain in this country is that there is no cold weather in India. In the first place, it is absurd to sum up the whole country, which has several varieties of climate, in one sweeping assumption. But in every part there is cold weather, more or

less, even though, as in Madras, there is very little of it at any particular season, and your relief from the prevailing heat is principally obtained from the sea-breeze which blows in the evenings throughout the year. But even the Madras Presidency has accessible hills, which are uninhabitable only when *too* cold; while in the Plains, in the North-West, and the Punjab, there is winter to this extent—that, during four months or so of the year, you may make ice sufficient to last for domestic purposes during all the hot weather. In Calcutta there is nothing like this state of things; and, in the race for ice, the Presidency would be nowhere but for the American ships, which bring over "Wenham Lake" enough to keep the population in skating, if it could be adapted to that purpose. But still, Calcutta has its winters, almost as cold as occasional mild winters in this country, when, though the days are usually bright, the nights are damp, and chilly, and misty, and sometimes foggy, to a fault; when you are glad of a fire at home, and have to go abroad in your thickest coats; when you get coughs, and colds, and ailments that settle on the lungs; and, in fact, have most of the seasonable enjoyments of home, including storms which arise with a sudden-

ness and a violence unknown in these prosaic regions. I do not refer to a cyclone, which is happily rare. But nothing is more common, during the rains, than this kind of surprise:—After a deluge all day, there is an accommodating state of the atmosphere towards evening—say at four or five o'clock—which tempts people abroad. Things, in fact, look quite charming; nobody has any fears either for their horses or themselves; carriages are ordered in a hundred homes, and crowds sally forth to enjoy a little of the beauty of nature before the inevitable advent of dinner and the surrender of their free will to the domestic four walls until bedtime. For be it remembered that Calcutta is not a place where people can always find places of amusement wherein to disport themselves after the meal of the day. Men can go in search of billiards, especially those who belong to a mess; but for ladies there is very little relaxation to be found out of doors, and the majority of families do not attempt to discover any beyond the limits of private parties. They are, therefore, doubly anxious to take the air during the afternoon, if the air will only allow them; and it continually happens that they are too confiding in appearances. The storm always

seems to wait until nearly everybody is out, and then it bursts forth with a vengeance. All is smiling and serene, when clouds are seen gathering ahead, and then great claps of thunder seem to split the sky, which is illumined from time to time by lightning, of which it would be difficult to form an idea from the feeble attempts at such demonstrations as are seen in this country. The rain, too, descends, not in lines, as we see it here, but in streams; the sky, instead of yielding it in regular order, pouring it down even in masses. At the first intimation of the outbreak, the horses' heads are all turned towards home; and as everybody lives in the same quarter, and everybody has driven out much in the same direction, the spectacle has all the animation of a contested race. Occasionally you hear of a carriage being completely overturned by a sudden squall; and it was upon an occasion of this kind that the lady mentioned by Captain Tattle was thrown out, and lay so long on the road exposed to the drenching downfall, that her hair turned its colour to that of a pea-green—a change which, however, I am not prepared to say is the usual effect of a copious immersion. Being caught in a storm of the kind, too, is always the more annoying, owing to the fact

that no sooner have you got home and into dry clothes than Nature begins to smile again—with something of a grin, surely, this time — and ten minutes afterwards there is a general "clear up," the sky looking so beautiful in reflecting the setting sun, that the prospect of bad weather for any time to come seems utterly out of the question.

Prudent persons who go out may be deceived by appearances; but even those who stay at home are not altogether exempt from disaster. The winter storms are naturally the strongest, and rain at this season is the more annoying from being unexpected. In an interior represented by the artist to whom I have referred, there is a vivid picture of what may possibly happen to a small party preparing to spend a quiet afternoon with a little music—a couple of sisters, say, with a friend of congenial tastes. All is as quiet as should be when a young lady is engaged at the piano, a young gentleman turning over the leaves, and another young lady contributing to the necessary conversation which fills up the intervals, when, on a sudden, a roar and a howl are heard from without, and in come the windows. The rain follows, as a matter of course, and the wind makes a clean sweep of most objects in the room. The Bearer, however alert, is not likely to prevent the

jilmils from being dashed into the middle of the apartment, preceded by the window-frames, with their broken glass, and the chairs from being blown over, those which have occupants involving them, perhaps, in the general discomfiture; while miscellaneous objects fly about the room of their own free will. The ladies seek safety in clinging to the pianoforte, and the gentleman's whiskers are in danger of being blown into infinite space; while the Skye terrier is so embarrassed by elements over which he has no control, that he can do nothing but bark at things in general, and does not even see the bird which has been blown in before the gale —an object which under happier conditions would have had his undivided attention. A pleasant termination, truly, to an afternoon party; and it will still be some days before the drawing-room resumes its pristine appearance. But, fortunately, they do not crowd their apartments with furniture in Calcutta as we do in England, and there are fewer small ornaments and knick-knacks about, so that less damage is done than might be supposed. The rooms themselves, moreover, are so large that there is a tolerable hope for escape in running before the wind. It is very fortunate that ladies in India, after a little experience, take kindly to casualties

of the kind. Neither of these will think much of their temporary discomfiture, which will furnish an amusing subject for conversation at dinner; so that, after all, there seems no reason for regretting the occurrence, which may be considered an agreeable variety in Calcutta life.

XIII.

FARMERS IN MUSLIN.

Can my readers picture to themselves an Agricultural Exhibition, at which the farmers are attired mainly in white muslin, with turbans instead of hats, and slippers instead of boots — the said farmers, moreover, having black or brown faces, decorated, perhaps, with paint, and generally set off by ear-rings of gold and precious stones, not to mention other rings wherever it is possible to place them — on the arms and the fingers, the ankles and the toes? Such an anomaly may have been suggested at Hanwell, but it is only lately that it has found existence in real life; and, even now, it may not be seen in this country. To behold it, one must have been at Calcutta about a couple of years ago, when a proceeding was enacted which had been hitherto unparalleled in India.

For the idea of this novel experiment, the local public are indebted, it appears, to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Cecil Beadon. It occurred to him, we are told, that an Agricultural Exhibition, somewhat on the model of those held in England, would be of material benefit to the country, by improving the breed of cattle, introducing a better class of agricultural implements, and stimulating the tillers of the soil to greater care concerning the quality of the produce brought to market. To carry out these objects, the most effectual measures were taken. Local committees were appointed in every part of India, and announcements of the nature of the scheme were circulated in all the native languages. The Bengal government advanced a sufficient sum of money for prizes, which were on a very liberal scale, and for the general expenses of the Exhibition: so there was no occasion to solicit subscriptions. But contributions of objects to be exhibited were demanded from all sides, and the response was satisfactory in the highest degree. By the end of the year the collections were nearly completed. These, consisting of live-stock, machinery, and produce, were all properly classified, and placed in temporary buildings erected on a large piece of

ground assigned for the purpose. And, when all was complete, the Exhibition was formally opened by Sir John Lawrence, who arrived out just in time for the ceremony. In honour of the occasion were gathered together natives of each Presidency and all the Provinces. Many were tempted for the first time from their homes; Rajahs and Nawabs, landowners and merchants, equally stimulated by the double attraction of a *tamasha*, and its promise of practical results. In the "saloon tent," where the Governer-General presided, was an array of notables, native and European, such as the City of Palaces has seldom seen; the gorgeous costumes of the natives, and brilliant uniforms of the British officers, being displayed the more conspicuously by contrast with the sombre civilian garb, which has a distinction of its own, not only because it is in the minority, but because it is still associated with the highest positions and the largest fortunes in the country. The ladies, who were very liberally dispersed among the company, were an exhibition in themselves, and gave to French millinery an attraction beyond the reach of martial accoutrements, the products of Persian looms, the gold-work of Delhi, or the precious stones of the Dekhan. It was the first

public occasion at which the new Viceroy was present, and he declared it to be a scource of great satisfaction to him that it was one for the advancement of agriculture. For, as he went on to observe, in a country like India, which is poor in comparison with its vast extent, and in which the commerce is small in relation to the numbers and productive powers of the population, it is on the progress and success of agricultural operations that national prosperity must largely depend. It was impossible, he said, that the intercourse of various persons gathered together from all quarters to witness the display of the produce of many places, and of machinery calculated to improve and stimulate production, could fail to cause manifold benefits to arise in the future: especially when the experience thus gained should be brought to bear upon exhibitions in every part of the empire.

The movement thus happily begun, was, indeed, a fortunate one for India, where agriculture, however well understood in its rude form, is without any of the scientific and practical aids it receives in this country; where the same implements are in use, and the same processes are employed, as in the earliest of recorded ages. That the experiment

thus made, was attended with complete success, has been proved by subsequent events; and the success is attributable, in the first place, to the influence of Government, and in the second place, to the railway. Without the first, the Agricultural Society, which co-operated in the object, could have done very little; and without the second, even the influence of Government would have been of far less avail. The natives, who want governing, and wait for the action of authority, would have responded but feebly to a private appeal, mistaking it, probably, for some plan for the encouragement of the "independent European" rather than themselves; and without the railway, the want of swift, certain, and inexpensive communication would have been an insuperable bar to success. Not, however, that the Exhibition was to be considered in the light of an eleemosynary aid. The Government advanced the funds in the first instance, but it was intended that the payments made for admission should render the movement self-supporting; and, in this respect, the object was nearly accomplished, there being but a small balance of expenditure left for the Government to defray.

Of the material of the Exhibition we have but a meagre account. Descriptive reporting does

not flourish in India, for the simple reason that descriptive reporters are not to be had, and the editors of the journals have little time to devote to such special work. We gather, however, that the machinery, the most important and attractive feature, was of a very satisfactory character. The steam ploughs, the brick-making machine, saw-mill, and locomotive, we are told, were all excellent of their kind, and attracted much attention; as well as smaller articles, such as centrifugal pumps, and so forth. Among other novelties was an eight-horse power engine and thrashing machine, intended to bewilder the native mind by being set to work in all its various departments—separating the grain from the straw, blowing away the chaff, and pouring out the clean product. A seed-crushing and oil-mill was also noticed as a magnificent machine. The number of models and tools was very great, and the show of cattle was said to be exceedingly good. In every department of the Exhibition the natives took an eager interest, and nothing could have been more pleasant than the entire proceedings, but for one little mishap.

The Exhibition had been witnessed by all classes of the community save one. While everybody else disported among the wonders which had been

brought together, the native ladies still remained caged birds, pining among their halls and bowers; solitary though surrounded by crowds; ignorant though in the midst of intelligence. Anybody who has tried to keep even a reasonable British female at home when a sight was to be seen out of doors, can form some idea of the difficulty of the task in the case of these imperious Oriental beauties. But how to accommodate them?—That was the question. They could not see without being seen, if they appeared in the crowd. That was clear. And to make them a part of the Exhibition was a thing not to be thought of. It was at last decided to give them a private view—by night. Fortunately, there was a full moon, which in the East makes night nearly as bright as day for practical purposes, and a great deal more romantic. Accordingly, it was ordered on behalf of the *beebies*, *burra* and *chota*—that is to say, the ladies, greater or less, as the case may be—that the grounds should be kept open till midnight on a particular evening, all male kind being rigorously excluded after sunset, with the exception of a few Coolies necessarily in attendance, whom it was obligingly agreed to consider non-existent for the occasion. A number of influential natives pledged themselves that their establishments should duly

attend, and it was believed that the appeal would be generally responded to. In order to make things as pleasant as possible, the wives of some of the high European officials volunteered to receive their native sisters, and act as hostesses. The night came, and the Mussulman and Hindoo ladies came. They were delighted with everything they saw, and all passed off as pleasantly as possible.

Next morning all Calcutta—that is to say, the European portion of the community—congratulated itself upon the triumph which had been achieved in the breaking down of the old barrier of native exclusiveness, from which the happiest results were augured. Nobody had a doubt that gatherings of the kind would bring about a state of things interfering considerably with the *purdah*—that it to say, the curtain, the symbol of seclusion. Already, indeed, said solemn talkers, the community of interest brought about by the material progress of the country, promises to create a new state of society, in which Mussulman and Hindoo women cannot retain their old degraded condition; and this is the more evident when we consider the development of education, which will find the next female generation a great deal too well fitted for society to be easily kept out of it.

But a whisper got afloat that the native ladies who attended the Exhibition were not generally of the high class supposed; and the suspicion was confirmed by a native journal, which loudly denounced the innovation. No native gentleman, said the writer, could allow the inmates of his Zenana to appear in a place even so partially public without dishonour to himself: and no native lady could so appear without loss of her dignity and modesty. His only source of satisfaction, he proceeded to say, was, that this reproach had been incurred only in very rare cases; the great majority present having been not only of the lowest social grade, but even the larger number of those, of the worst class, infamously separated from society. That this statement was in the main true, there seems no reason to doubt, and there was certainly no satisfactory explanation offered by the native gentlemen who suggested the concession. Perhaps they were unwilling agents in the matter—had promised more than they could perform—and not being able to procure the attendance of the right ladies, had allowed the wrong ladies to take their places, in order to avoid giving offence. But this is certain, that European society considered itself to have been insulted by native society, and that a breach was made between the two which, at the

period in question, was more than usually undesirable. Of the feeling which thus arose, the first sign was the exclusion of all native gentlemen from Sir John Lawrence's first great entertainment at Government House—an unexampled measure, which could have been forced upon a statesman like Sir John only by very serious considerations. That a better understanding has since been re-established may be supposed; but it is plain from this little piece of experience, that we are not quite so near the annihilation of native prejudices as some sanguine persons suppose.

The Agricultural Exhibition, however, was a success as far as its intended objects are concerned; and the example of Bengal was soon followed in the Punjab and elsewhere; Agricultural Exhibitions being now the rule instead of the exception all over the country. The material progress of the Empire, promoted by these means, must prepare the way for the more important ends in view, and education and time must be left to do the rest.

XIV.

HOMEWARD BOUND.—INDIA AS IT IS.

"ONCE more upon the waters!" The Peninsular and Oriental Company's steam-ship *China* is taking us towards England. We have got clear of the Hoogley *without* an accident, which is the exception rather than the rule of late years, in that treacherous river, whose dangers will one day cause Calcutta to be superseded as a port. We have touched at Madras, as a matter of course; renewed our acquaintance with the juggler and coloured ices, as in duty bound; have got in and out of Galle Harbour with continued good fortune; have reached Aden without drifting upon a coral reef by the way; and are once more in the Red Sea, with every appearance of a safe arrival at Suez, with the plagues of Egypt, in the shape of transit arrangement, still to encounter, but the prospect of Home in pleasant perspective.

Apart from the latter consideration, coming home is a far less attractive process than going out. In the passage to India, you have always a large proportion of fellow-travellers, who are making the journey for the first time,—elated with freedom and novelty, full of hope, with all the world before them. But coming the contrary way, these are an impossibility. None are very young; some are unequivocally old; others, of whatever age, are invalids; and all are most unromantically experienced. Of course there are many who are highly elated at the change; but this is mostly because it *is* a change,—an escape from conditions of life which they dislike. Animal spirits, to be sure, are not wanting—they never are among Anglo-Indians.

There is festivity and flirting, and exurberance sufficient for dancing and amateur theatricals. But the youthful element is missing—and nothing can replace that. However, these outward conditions are not of great importance to most of us. Personal enjoyment on the way is not, after all, the main object of a journey; and if it were, we have, happily, different ideas of pleasure, according to temperament and time of life. I have no doubt that old Colonel Bobbery, of the Bengal N. I., who abuses the country he has left behind, as well as everything he sees

around him, who has a good word to say for home only because he has not had an opportunity of quarrelling with it for thirty years, who eats and drinks under protest, and betrays, in short, a condition of chronic ill-temper;—I have no doubt that he enjoys himself as much as the most high-spirited and cheerful person on board. Take, too, Lady Catermaran, the wife of Sir Ajax Catermaran, K.C.B., K.S.I., of the Madras Cavalry, who spends most of his time smoking cheroots on the raised forecastle, looking like a penguin perched upon a rock. She is quite young for her rank—rank goes very much with age in India—and might be popular, and even admired. But it is plain that she finds her real pleasure in scandalizing and quarrelling, and prefers having enemies to having friends. Is that charming Mrs. Bulbul, who likes everybody, and whom everybody likes, and who talks so much to young Mr. Rose, half as happy as the Madras *Burra Beebee?* You may be sure she is not. I am afraid that amiability is sometimes a bore to keep up; while ill-humour sets easily upon a great many of us.

The above is about the worst I can say of the passengers, which is wonderful, considering that I am in the midst of friends. But most of them

are really very kind, companionable persons; and I would praise them with pleasure if I thought there was any chance of being listened to. Besides, I have something more than my neighbours to think about. The wonderful country I have just left is enough to occupy any man's mind. Let me, then, from my old place in the forecastle (you have to be civil to everybody on the quarter-deck, which interferes with intelligent reverie) call to mind the present condition of the country, which has developed most remarkably ever since the date of my first chapter.

First, as regards revenue, which at the end of the last financial year, was upwards of forty-seven millions; the estimate for next year being still larger. Nearly one-half, as usual, comes from the land-tax; and opium has been contributing more than its ordinary proportion, as did salt, until the Government, being unable to compete with the low price of the imported article, withdrew from the manufacture in Bengal.

The Income Tax was another loss to the revenue last year; and the customs duties also fell off through various remissions. The increase in other items must, therefore, have been very great. It is true that there is still a deficit, which is ascrib-

able simply to the enormous military expenditure necessitated by the mutinies, and the subsequent frontier war. Moreover, the public debt, which had increased from the same cause, has been to some extent reduced. The finances generally have been placed upon a healthy footing, the entire system of account having been remodelled, and reforms introduced into banking and currency, especially by the introduction of a paper circulation. A gold currency was found a more difficult matter to arrange. The proposition to make the English and Australian sovereign a legal tender for ten rupees, was found objectionable; but it is taken in Government treasuries for that amount, and paid from the same treasuries upon the same terms, when not objected to; the tender, in fact, is made permissive, though not enforced. Meanwhile a commission, under the presidency of Sir William Mansfield, has been investigating the entire subject, and it is said that their decision is in favour of a gold coinage as a permanent arrangement.

Returning for a moment to the land, it is as well to notice the extent to which Lord Canning's reforms have obtained practical results. The redemption of the Land Tax, which was supposed to be such a boon to the British settler, would,

it is now believed, be sought for in very few cases, and, in fact, be nearly inoperative: so it has been decided to sanction such a measure only in cases where lands are required for dwelling-houses, factories, gardens, plantations, and similar purposes. A permanent settlement, which is not open to equal objections, is meantime authorized throughout India, at the present or revised rates, in all districts or parts of districts in which no considerable increase can be expected in the land revenue, and where its equitable apportionment has been or may hereafter be satisfactorily ascertained. Thus, where agriculture is backward, population scanty, and rent not fully developed, permanency of settlement must be refused; while, in the case of estates fairly cultivated, and with fully developed resources, it will be at once granted. And in order that there may be no mistake in the matter, the Government say that the Permanent Settlement will be granted for all estates in which the actual cultivation amounts to eighty per cent. of the cultivable area. The politic nature of these precautions must be admitted; but as much cannot be said for the regulations concerning the sale of waste lands, which are maintained in all their obstructive force.

Public works offer more pleasant prospects.

Taking the three Presidencies together, there are nearly five thousand miles of railway laid out, and of these, between three and four thousand are in practical operation. Of telegraphic communication, there is no less than fourteen thousand miles. Irrigation works are unhappily less advanced; but as the mutiny of 1857 reformed our political system, so the famine of 1866, which has called such general attention to the requirement, may have the effect of fertilizing and connecting the country, so that an affliction of the kind need never be feared for the future. Moreover—and this is the really important fact, for famine has given warning of the want again and again—the present Secretary of State for India, the motto of whose administration is "Peace and Public Works," is said to be free from the old prejudice against the employment of private enterprize. We may expect, therefore, to see a large impetus given to irrigation, and cannot doubt the result in a country which has the Godavery and the Ganges Canal. In roads, more is doing than is generally supposed; for these primary requirements are principally interesting to those who have to traverse them. The necessity of providing cross-roads, as feeders to the railways, by which the traffic of the country may be attracted to the great lines of

communication, has not been neglected; and the construction of many works of the kind has been undertaken by the various local authorities. Some idea of the activity displayed in providing barracks for the troops may be gathered from the fact that the new scheme of improved buildings for this purpose, now in progress, will cost between nine and ten millions to carry out.

Legislation has of late been principally confined to practical requirements, the Government being wisely disinclined to hazard the introduction of any novelty in the way of principles just now. But it is difficult to resist the innovating spirit which is seizing the educated natives in the Presidency towns. It was this class, or one section of it at least, in Calcutta, who cried out for the re-marriage of Hindoo widows, and, with commendable consistency, for the recent law of divorce. Of late, there has been a movement among them for the abolition of polygamy, a delicate question, with which the authorities respectfully but firmly decline to interfere.

In legal administration, the improvement under the new system is beyond doubt. The High Courts have worked so well at the Presidencies that they have been extended to the Provinces, and ruffians with white skins no longer escape adequate punish-

ment on account of the trouble and expense of sending them, say, eight hundred miles down-country for trial. The British barrister, who used to be a rare bird in the Provinces, is now a regular element in Mofussil society. I heard of one going the other day to practice at Lucknow, where, by way of beginning, he constitutes the entire bar, with the exception, of course, of the *Vakeels*. He will not be long alone. There was a similar case of desolation at Delhi, which was soon relieved.

The law, under the new system, is supposed to be of equal application to natives and Europeans. But there is necessarily among so many varieties of the natives themselves, a great deal of exceptional legislation. The working of the penal code is sometimes anomalous. Here is an instance, not of much importance, but it serves as an illustration:—There is a clause in the code about preaching to a person against his will, intended as a check upon indiscreet missionaries, and amateurs in the same field. An East Indian (Christian) had a friend of his, belonging to the same class, up before the magistrate for committing this offence. The friend, it seems, had taken the liberty of giving the complainant a little wholesome advice about his immoral course of life, asking him, in particular, "where he expected to go

to!" I forget how the magistrate dealt with the case. The natives, who have been the staunchest advocates of the "one law for all," are not quite so satisfied with it, upon some points, as they expected. I saw a complaint some time ago in a native paper, of its practical inequality in reference to the crime of perjury. The argument was to this effect:—"You punish European and native alike with great severity for the offence, but as perjury is a peculiarly native vice, the punishment falls unfairly." The writer evidently considered that the law should act upon the commercial principle of "a reduction upon taking a quantity." In reference to petty thefts, perhaps, it would not be disadvantageous to take into account the idiosyncrasies of the native character. Native servants think nothing of appropriating unconsidered trifles belonging to their masters, and the custom is so understood that they are not morally to be classed as thieves on that account. But a low class of Europeans and East Indians in Calcutta, who, except in a country like India, would not have servants at all, continually bring up their wretched retainers for the most trifling thefts,—such things as an empty wine bottle, or a wick belonging to a lamp, being made the occasion of sending an unhappy man to jail.

The magistrates have a very difficult choice between disobeying the law and making it a medium of persecution.

Education received a heavy blow in 1857; but by dint of associating it as little as possible with Government, and disconnecting it altogether with religion, public instruction is now making satisfactory progress. As a general rule, it is considered that the policy in force has been very successful as regards the universities, colleges, and higher schools; but a great deal remains to be done for the education of the lower classes. One of the most remarkable facts in connection with the working of the department, is the large number of girls' schools in the North-West Provinces. Not many years ago, female education in India was considered quite out of the question.

In agriculture, great progress is making. I have already given some account of the first Agricultural Exhibition in Bengal. In eight of the ten divisions of that province, other exhibitions were held during the financial year 1864–65; and the example has been followed in all parts of the country. The natives everywhere take the greatest interest in machinery, and are eager for improvements of all kinds. The enormous demand upon India for

cotton during the American war, though to a great extent only temporary, has produced permanent effects in the country, as regards this article of produce; and not only are the finer kinds grown with success, but their preparation has been much improved.

Among the latest agricultural experiments may be mentioned a not very successful attempt to introduce maize and Carolina rice into Madras; the cultivation of the South American chinchona plant (for the supply of quinine), principally in the same Presidency, with triumphant results; and the trial of the cactus as food for cattle, which, except in the case of an eccentric young calf, seems to have been a signal failure. The ingenious projector admits that the taste must be an acquired one, and he assists the acquirement by cutting off other descriptions of food from the animals under experiment. Among these, by-the-way, he does not seem to have included a donkey. There is a particular reason why that animal eats thistles, which might apply in the present case.

Sanitary measures have been much attended to of late years, and have done a great deal of good. They do not keep off the cholera; but that is because we do not understand what the

cholera is. Drainage has much improved under the municipal system established of late years.

The European Army, which has been fixed, since the mutinies, at seventy thousand men, has been slightly reduced this year. The Native Army has been re-organized, and turned into Irregulars: a most ill-judged arrangement, considering that the essence of the Irregular system was its exceptional character. The regiments were "picked," both as regards officers and men, and no ordinary material is fit for the purpose. Where the same organization is extended to the entire army, it follows that you must take both officers and men as they come, and we had a little experience of the result in Bhootan. The only satisfactory sign of late in connection with the old Indian army, is the handsome concession of Lord Cranborne to the claims of the officers, arising from the mistaken policy of amalgamation. It is a fair and liberal measure, and has given general satisfaction. The condition of the British soldier in India has immensely improved—mainly through the active sympathy of the best friend he has had for many years—Sir Hugh Rose, now Lord Strathnairn. His barracks have been reformed; his food rendered more wholesome by variety and better cookery; his drink regulated

by sanitary considerations; he has clubs, libraries, skittle-alleys, racquet-courts, cricket-grounds, gardens, theatres, gymnasia, and workshops; every possible provision for his instruction, pleasure, and profit. There is only one thing wanting—something that will reconcile him to service in India.

The Civil Service is thoroughly efficient under the Competition System, which produces a larger average of efficiency that the Patronage System. But while the present arrangement effectually excludes dunces, or any other form of "hard bargains," there is reason to fear that it is not calculated to bring to light the highest order of ability. However, great men do not come among us every day; there are exceptions to every rule; and perhaps they may yet arise in the Civil Service. The country, however, is not so dependent upon the Civil Service as formerly. A great number of the appointments—judicial posts more especially—are held by barristers, and the "uncovenanted" servants have a deservedly larger share in the good things of the Service than used to fall to their lot.

But the social changes will seem greater than all to the new-comer in India. The *old* Indians are fast disappearing, and the new Indians are of so many different designations—if not classes—that they

make society almost as varied as in this country. The change is not welcomed by those who remember the former condition of things—the confidence and ease of intercourse among a community of persons, whose normal relation to one another was that of acquaintances, while friendships were the easiest things in the world. For, although the old Indians are accused of being fond of etiquette, its forms sat very lightly upon them, and these once complied with, there was thorough frankness and familiarity upon the shortest possible notice. Habits of the kind are of course not changed in a day, and to some extent the same spirit animates society, at least in the Provinces. But everywhere there is a crowd of strangers, and the intimate people have no longer a society of their own.

In some ways the change is a beneficial one. If sudden thoughts do not strike people to swear eternal friendship in private life, there is a great deal of intercourse in more or less public places, where there is no unnecessary exclusiveness, and men may know something of their neighbours, even though not bound to them by class association. In the Presidency towns, something of this facility has generally existed. But every large station in these days has its club, its assembly-rooms, its

"institution," of some kind or other, at which people meet in common.

A new feature in social intercourse is the delivery of lectures at these places, which afford the cleverer members of society an excellent opportunity for throwing off their superfluous intelligence for the benefit of other people, and keeping their own vanity up to a healthy point, which I need scarcely say in the case of clever people is a very important matter. Music, too, is far more cultivated than it used to be, and in almost all parts of India amateur concerts are frequent and successful. Even ladies, who are peculiarly sensitive in India of the light of publicity, sometimes assist upon these occasions, and have been known to condescend so far—for a charitable object—even when money was taken at the doors. I have also heard of Indian ladies assisting at Amateur Theatricals, with the same freedom as in England; but the performances in these cases are of course private. As a general rule, the Amateur Companies play in a barrack or other large room in which there is a stage *en permanence* for the purpose, and by no means disdain to sell the tickets, the proceeds of which go to cover the expenses. As professional actresses are seldom available—at any rate in the Provinces—the female parts are played by Ensigns, or other enter-

prizing youths, to whom confidence has come before beards. Every now and then some adventurous "Entertainer" makes a tour of the country; but seldom, I fancy, with satisfactory results; and travelling circuses appear to meet with no better success. An Opera Company which has been lately enlivening Calcutta, seems to be an exception to the general rule, being the best thing of the kind that has ever been seen in India.

In the City of Palaces the great difficulty in the way of the Drama is to get people to go out after dinner—that meal being late, and those who partake of it lazy. Considering that there is the same drawback in London—at any rate as far as any performance before nine o'clock is concerned—this weakness on the part of Calcutta may be considered excusable. But there is no reason why people in India should not dine earlier—as they used to do before they took to importing their tastes from home—and be fit for something more than going to sleep after they get into the drawing-room.

It is remarkable, however, that when fairly roused for a Ball, the most languid among them manage to stay up until "all's blue," and a great many of the guests yellow. But that they have always done in India, and I suppose always will do in other respects

Anglo-Indians lead a more public life than of yore, and the result is a far better understanding among them. One of the bonds of association has been caused by the establishment of volunteer corps, which, though they have different degrees of success in different places, exist in a great many, and have the same encouragement given them by Government—as far as the capitation allowance for effective members is concerned—as in this country. These, of course, give occasion for gatherings innumerable; and exhibitions of various kinds afford a similar opportunity. Altogether, there is more *life* in India than there used to be; and the animating spirit, which is not quite Colonial, nor quite "Company," is of a very healthy kind. But it would be healthier still if people were not always wanting to come home, instead of making their home in the East. And I am not in a position to lecture them upon this foible, since I am rapidly nearing Suez, with the prospect of Alexandria, an intention towards Malta, and a view to Marseilles or Southampton, as the case may be.

THE END.

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